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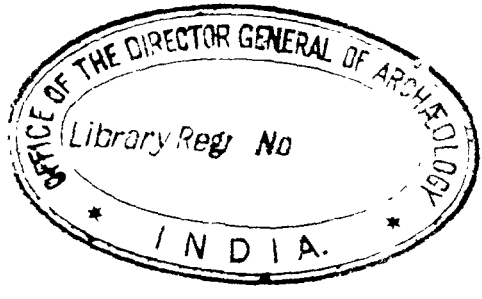
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# THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION IN VEDIC LITERATURE



# The Origin and Development of RELIGION IN VEDIC LITERATURE

BY

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since December 1930

WITH A FOREWORD BY

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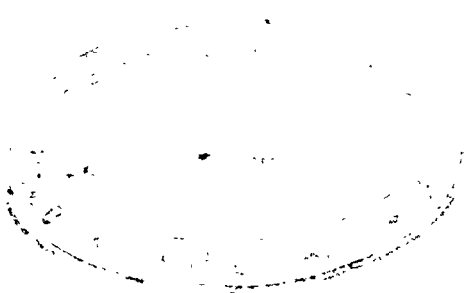
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TO

MY FATHER



## ERRATA

The following errors occur in the pagination but they do not affect the text or the order of the book :—

pp. *159/160* are missing.

Two extra pages have been inserted between pp. *186/187*.

The reference in the Index to the Rig-Veda on p. *160* should read p. *161*.

# FOREWORD

I have much pleasure in complying with the request of the Hon'ble Dr. P. S. Deshmukh that I should write a foreword to his interesting and valuable study of Religion in Vedic Literature. The work represents a thesis which Dr. Deshmukh, one of my students at Edinburgh, prepared at Oxford under the guidance of the late Professor A. A. Macdonell, who would unquestionably have welcomed the publication of a contribution to the subject on which he himself was so high an authority. It appears without substantial modification from the form in which it was approved by the examiners for the degree of D.Phil., for the author's work as Minister of Education in the Central Provinces has inevitably left him neither leisure nor opportunity to carry further what was originally intended to cover the whole field of the origin, development, and interrelation of indigenous Indian religions.

The question of the origin of religion has been attacked once more by Dr. Deshmukh, with full recognition of the difficulties of his undertaking. When we recognize the enormous period of time during which man is now asserted to have evolved on the earth, and compare it with the fact that we have such scanty knowledge of his thoughts as revealed by writing and inferred from cult implements and edifices for any period earlier than 3000 B.C., it is obvious that dogmatism on the subject is wholly impossible. But it is difficult not to feel that it is an impossible task to explain the evolution of religion from magic in any form, and that we must accept as ultimate the religious sentiment. We are, it is true, only gradually emerging from the doctrines of a crude evolutionism, but already it is less fashionable than it was to assert that consciousness is a late epiphenomenon on matter, and we may anticipate that it will eventually be generally accepted that it is unwise to

claim that religion is derived from magic and is the creation of minds which had realized that magic could not produce the effects which it was at first believed to be potent to accomplish.

The second part of the thesis is devoted to questions of less complexity but not less interest. The sketches given of the Indo-Europeans, their religion, the Indo-Iranian modifications, and the Vedic religion are fresh and interesting, and will serve as a stimulating introduction to these topics for those who desire to have fuller knowledge. The salient features are clearly stated, and the author's judgment is sane, and has preserved him from the error of mistaking obscure aspects of Vedic belief and practice for the essential elements of the religion. It deserves and will, I trust, receive cordial welcome both in India and in Europe.

A. Berriedale Keith

*The University of Edinburgh,*
*3 May 1933.*

# PREFACE

What is published here was a thesis presented and approved for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (D.Phil.) by the University of Oxford. The subject originally selected was 'The origin, development, and inter-relation of indigenous Indian religions'. It was, however, soon found that an adequate treatment of this theme would take me considerably beyond the scope of a single good-sized dissertation. With the permission of the University authorities therefore, the title of the thesis was altered to 'The origin and development of religion in Vedic literature'. Even this altered subject proved too extensive for the time I could spend on it, which itself depended upon the finances at my command. The latter consideration thus forced me to present the thesis in an incomplete form and I am indebted to the Oxford University for permitting me to submit it in that form.

On my return home, I had to devote myself to social, political and, last but not least, professional activities so entirely that I could spare little time to complete this work. Nor could I postpone its publication indefinitely as I was under a promise to the University to publish it as early as possible.

The decision therefore, to present it to readers in its present form had to be taken. The heavy responsibilities of the office of Minister of the Provincial Government coupled with the handicap of a want of a good library, came in the way of a thorough revision of what had been already written. Even a complete verification of all references cited in the work could not be undertaken for want of necessary books. For these reasons, a number of possibly avoidable mistakes may have crept in. All that I can now do, is to hope that they are not too many.

To my two professors the late Professor A. A. Macdonell of Oxford and Professor A. B. Keith of Edinburgh, I owe

a profound debt of gratitude. The late Professor Macdonell's *Vedic Mythology* was invaluable to me in the writing of this thesis and Professor Keith's 'Foreword' to this volume has placed me under a fresh obligation. I must also thank those in charge of the British Museum in London and the Bodleian, Oxford, for having given me all facilities so essential for research studies. I did most of the work in the serene atmosphere of these two famous British institutions.

The publication of this volume would have been still further delayed had it not been for my friend Dr. M. S. Modak, Assistant Inspector of Schools, Berar, who has seen the book through the press, and helped me with the work of reading proofs. The laborious work of compiling the index was done by Mr. H. N. Sinha, Assistant Professor, Morris College, Nagpur. I am thankful to them both.

P. S. DESHMUKH.

*Mount Pleasant, Pachmarhi,*
*30 June 1933.*

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# ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| AĀ. | *Aitareya Āraṇyaka.* |
| AĀA. | ,, ,, (Āndhra recension). |
| AB. | *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa.* |
| AGS. | *Āśvalāyana Gṛhya Sūtra.* |
| AJRPE. | *American Journal of Religious Psychology and Education.* |
| Anu. | *Anuśāsana Parva* of the MB. |
| Āp.Dh.S. | *Āpastamba Dharma Sūtra.* |
| Āp.GS. | *Āpastamba Gṛhya Sūtra.* |
| ĀŚS. | *Āśvalāyana Śrauta Sūtra.* |
| AV. | *Atharvaveda.* |
| Av. | Avesta, Avestan. |
| Barth, RI. | A. Barth, *The Religions of India*, Eng. tr., London, 1882. |
| Bartholomae, | AIW. Chr. Barthlomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Strassburg, 1905. |
| BCV. | *Bhāṇḍārkar Commemoration Volume*, Poona, 1917. |
| Bergaigne, | RV. A. Bergaigne, *La Religion Védique, d'après les hymnes du Rigvéda*, 3 vols., Paris, 1878–83. |
| Bloomfield, | AV. M. Bloomfield, 'The Artharvaveda', GIAP, Strassburg, 1899. |
| Bloomfield, | RV. M. Bloomfield, *Religion of the Veda*, New York and London, 1908. |
| Bradke, DA. | P. von Bradke, *Dyaus Asura*, Halle, 1885. |
| *Bṛh.* | *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upanishad.* |
| Bulg. | Bulgarian. |
| *Chānd.* | *Chāndogya Upanishad.* |
| CHI. | *Cambridge History of India*, edited by E. J. Rapson, volume I. |
| Carnoy, IE. | A. J. Carnoy, *Les Indo-Européens*, Paris and Brussels, 1921. |
| Dhalla, Z.T. | M. N. Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Theology*, New York, 1914. |
| DHMV. | *Dastur Hoshang Memorial Volume*, Bombay, 1918. |
| Dh.S. | *Dharma Sūtra.* |
| Dutt, CAI. | R. C. Dutt, *A History of Civilization in Ancient India*, 2 vols., London, 1893; Calcutta, 1899. |
| EB. | *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 11th ed., Cambridge, 1911. |
| ERE. | *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, Edinburgh, 1908–21. |
| Feist, *Kultur* | S. Feist, *Kultur, Ausbreitung, und Herkunft der Indogermanen*, Berlin, 1913. |
| Frazer, GB. | J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, 3rd ed., 12 vols., London, 1911ff. |
| GIAP. | *Grundriss der indo-arischen Philologie und Altertumskunde*, Strassburg, 1903. |
| Gop. | *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa.* |
| Grassman | H. Grassman, *Wörterbuch zum Ṛigveda.* |
| Grimm, TM. | L. J. Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology*, Eng. tr., 4 vols., London, 1882–88. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Griswold, RV. | H. D. Griswold, *The Religion of the Ṛigveda*, London, 1923. |
| G S. | *Gṛhya Sūtra.* |
| Hardy, VBP. | E. Hardy, *Die vedische-brahmanische Periode*, Münster, 1893. |
| Hillebrandt, RL. | A. Hillebrandt, 'Rituallitteratur', GIAP, Strassburg, 1897. |
| Hillebrandt, VM. | A. Hillebrandt, *Vedische Mythologie*, 3 vols., Breslau, 1891–1902; abridged, 1 vol., 1910. |
| Hopkins, RI. | E. W. Hopkins, *Religions of India*, Boston, 1895; London, 1896. |
| Hume | R. E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*, Oxford, 1921. |
| IA. | *Indian Antiquary.* |
| I.E., I.E.s | Indo-European, Indo-Europeans. |
| IF. | *Indogermanische Forschungen.* |
| I.I., I.I.s | Indo-Iranian, Indo-Iranians. |
| I.St. | A. Weber, *Indische Studien.* |
| I.Str. | A. Weber, *Indische Streifen.* |
| JA. | *Journal Asiatique.* |
| JAOS. | *Journal of the American Oriental Society.* |
| JRAS. | *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society.* |
| Kaegi, RV. | A. Kaegi, *The Ṛigveda*, Eng. tr., Boston, 1886. |
| *Kāṭh.* | *Kāṭhaka Saṁhitā.* |
| *Kauṣ.* | *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa.* |
| Keith, IM. | A. B. Keith, *Indian Mythology*, Boston, 1917. |
| Keith, RB. | A. B. Keith, *Ṛigveda Brāhmaṇas*, trans., Cambridge, Mass., 1920. |
| Keith, TS. | A. B. Keith, *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*, trans., 2 vols., Cambridge, Mass., 1914. |
| KŚS. | *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra.* |
| KZ. | *Kuhn's Zeitschrift.* |
| Lévi, DS. | S. Lévi, *La Doctrine du sacrifice dans les Brāhmaṇas*, Paris, 1898. |
| Macdonell, *Hymns.* | A. A. Macdonell, *Hymns from the Ṛigveda*, Calcutta, 1923. |
| Macdonell, HSL. | A. A. Macdonell, *A History of Sanskṛit Literature*, London, 1900. |
| Macdonell, VM. | A. A. Macdonell, 'Vedic Mythology', GIAP., Strassburg, 1897. |
| Macdonell, VR. | A. A. Macdonell, 'Vedic Religion', ERE., vol. XII, 1920. |
| Macdonell, VRS. | A. A. Macdonell, *A Vedic Reader for Students*, Oxford, 1917. |
| *Mait.* | *Maitrāyaṇī Saṁhitā.* |
| Manu. | *Manusmṛti.* |
| MB. | *Mahābhārata.* |
| Meyer, GA. | E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Altertums*, 3rd ed., vol. I, part ii, Stuttgart, 1913. |

| | |
|---|---|
| MM. | Max Müller. |
| Moulton, ERPP. | J. H. Moulton, *Early Religious Poetry of Persia*, Cambridge, 1911. |
| Moulton, EZ. | J. H. Moulton, *Early Zoroastrianism*, London, 1913. |
| Muir | J. Muir, *Original Sanskrit Texts*, 5 vols., London, 1858–72. |
| Müller, AR. | F. Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, London, 1860. |
| Müller, ASL. | *A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature*, 2nd ed., London, 1860. |
| ,, Chips | *Chips from a German Workshop*, 4 vols., London, 1898. |
| ,, NR. | *Natural Religion*, London, 1898. |
| ,, OGR. | *Origin and Growth of Religion, as illustrated by the religions of India*, London, 1898. |
| ,, PR. | *Physical Religion*, London, 1898. |
| Oldenberg, RV. | H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, Leipzig, 1894. |
| PAOS. | *Proceedings of the American Oriental Society.* |
| Poussin, IEII. | De la Vallée Poussin, *Indo-européens et Indo-iraniens*, Paris, 1924. |
| P. W. | Petersberg, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch.* |
| Ragozin, VI. | Z. A. Ragozin, *Vedic India*, London, 1895. |
| Rapson, AI. | E. J. Rapson, *Ancient India*, Cambridge, 1914. |
| RV. | *Ṛigveda.* |
| *Śat.* | *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa.* |
| SBE. | Sacred Books of the East. |
| Schrader | O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der Indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, Strassburg, 1901. |
| Schrader, AR. | O. Schrader, 'Aryan Religion', ERE., vol. II. |
| Schröder, AR. | L. von Schröder, *Arische Religion*, vol. I, Leipzig, 1914. |
| Spiegel, AP. | F. Spiegel, *Die Arische Periode*, Leipzig, 1887. |
| ŚS. | *Śrauta Sūtra.* |
| SV. | *Sāma-Veda.* |
| TA. | *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka.* |
| TB. | *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa.* |
| Tḍ.B. | *Tāṇḍya Brāhmaṇa.* |
| TS. | *Taittirīya Saṁhitā.* |
| Tylor, PC. | E. B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 2 vols., London, 1873. |
| *Vāj.* | *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā.* |
| Vāl. | Vālakhilya Hymns. |
| *Vend.* | *Vendidad.* |
| VI. | Macdonell and Keith, *Vedic Index*, London, 1912. |
| Wallis, CRV. | H. F. Wallis, *Cosmology of the Ṛigveda*, London, 1887. |
| Weber, HIL. | A. Weber, *The History of Indian Literature*, 2nd ed., London, 1882. |
| Wilke, RI. | *Die Religion der Indogermanen*, Leipzig, 1903. |
| Winternitz | M. Winternitz, *Geschichte der Indischen Litteratur*, 2nd ed., 2 vols., Leipzig, 1908. |
| WZKM. | *Wiener Zeitschrift fur die Kunde des Morgenlandes.* |
| Yaj. | *Yajur-Veda.* |
| Yāska, Nir. | Yāska, *Nirukta.* |

| | |
|---|---|
| Yt. | *Yasht.* |
| ZDMG. | *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft.* |
| Zft. | Zeitschrift. |
| Zimmer, AIL. | H. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, Berlin, 1879. |

# PART I

# DEFINITION AND ORIGIN OF RELIGION

## CHAPTER I

# DEFINITION OF RELIGION

THERE are numberless definitions of religion and yet there is none which is admitted to be the most correct or the most generally applicable.[1] Some modern authorities on the subject seem to give up all hope of defining the word. Professor C. C. J. Webb[2] says, 'I do not myself believe that religion can be defined' and Andrew Lang[3] gives the following advice: 'No attempt to define the word is likely to be quite satisfactory, but almost any definition may serve the purpose of an argument, if the writer who employs it states his meaning frankly and adheres to it steadfastly.' We will follow Lang and give at the end of the present chapter a minimum definition which will guide us in our investigation of the problem of the origin of religion. But before doing this we will give an account of some of the principal definitions, a laborious task, but one that is highly interesting and instructive.

It would indeed have been easier to understand and more convenient to deal with the matter could we but classify these definitions. It appears, however, that this is neither possible nor very desirable, because of the inherent defect of classification according to the constituent elements of the subject defined, these elements being as varied and numerous as the definitions themselves. Moreover, if a clear-cut classification is adopted and enforced, exclusion of some definitions from all consideration and a forced insertion of

1 Lord Morley says: 'There are said to be ten thousand definitions of religion.'—*Nineteenth Century*, April 1905.

2 *Group Theories of Religion*, London and N.Y., 1916, p. 59. Sir H. Jones, in *A Faith that Enquires*, London, 1922, p. 36, says that any attempt at expressing the character of religion in a definition seems to be doomed to fail.

3 *Myth, Ritual and Religion*, London, 1899, I, p. 1. Frazer, GB., I. i. p. 222, gives and follows the same advice.

others in some class, when it happens—as it usually does and is bound to happen—that they do not naturally fall in any of the adopted divisions, is inevitable.[1]

This becomes clear when we consider the two notable attempts that have been made at such a classification. The first is that of Max Müller[2] and the other that of Professor J. H. Leuba.[3] The former seeks to arrange most definitions 'under two heads, in so far as they lay the chief stress on the *practical* or on the *theoretical* side of religion'.[4] But there are definitions which do not 'lay the chief stress' on either side of religion, and say that both are equally essential for constituting religion. For instance, according to Frazer's definition of religion, 'propitiation or conciliation of powers'[5] is as necessary as a belief in them.

Professor Leuba's classification is almost wholly psychological and is much more complete. He divides a list of forty-eight definitions into three groups, corresponding to the three constituents of psychical life; intellect, feeling and will. In the first group, which he calls the group of Intellectualistic definitions, 'a specific intellectual element is given as the essence or the distinguishing mark of religion'. In the second, called the Affectivistic group, 'it is one or several specific emotions or sentiments which are singled out as the religious differentiæ'. In the third, the Voluntaristic or practical group, 'active principle, the cravings, the desires, the impulses, the will, take the place occupied by the intellect or the feelings in the other cases'.

The chief objection to this classification is, that some definitions define religion as consisting of two psychological elements which are equally prominent, and that putting them into one class or the other is simply arbitrary. Moreover, it is now generally recognized that any good definition of religion must consist of both belief and practices, and

[1] Professor Leuba admits this difficulty in *A Psychological Study of Religion*, N.Y., 1912, p. 25.

[2] NR., pp. 60ff.

[3] Leuba, op. cit., ii. and Appendix.

[4] NR., p. 60.

[5] GB., I. i. p. 222.

that religion is more the effect of the combined activity of human mind as a whole rather than any one of its constituent elements in particular. Nor is it by any means easy to determine which of these elements, as a rule, predominates over the others, since this would depend on the character of a particular religion. A definition formed to meet these requirements could thus not be called either Intellectualistic or Affectivistic or Voluntaristic and will have no place in the above classification.

Wilhelm Wundt,[1] gives yet another classification, which however, embraces some of the theories of religious origin rather than attempts definitions. We shall have occasion to refer to this in the course of the next chapter.

Professor Jastrow, on the other hand, follows the historical method by which he can do justice to every important definition without neglecting or unnecessarily stretching the meaning of any one of them. It must, however, be admitted that there is no historical continuity among all of these definitions. Had this been the case, we ought to have had a fixed definition long ago. Whether this diversity and want of agreement is due to the subject being approached from very different points of view or whether it is a matter of irreconcilable opinions and beliefs, the fact remains that some of the most modern definitions are as confused as any that were proposed by writers many years ago.

Having found the classificatory method of dealing with the definition of religion unsatisfactory, and the historical method without historical background, we will adopt a method of our own which will be unfolded as we proceed.

To begin with, we have certain definitions, both ancient and modern, which are really not so much definitions as one-sided opinions with regard to the origin or value of religion, looking upon religion of any kind as sheer madness, 'a symptom of a diseased brain'. Thus Empedocles, in the 5th century B.C., declared it to be 'a sickness of mind',

[1] *Ethics*, I. Cf. *The Facts of the Moral Life*, Eng. tr., London, 1902, pp. 49–51.

and Feuerbach in the last century characterized it as 'the most pernicious malady of humanity'.[1] To Herakleitos, in the 6th century B.C., religion is a disease, though a sacred disease. Max Müller, however, doubts whether there was in the sayings of Herakleitos the same hostile spirit against all religion as that which pervades the writings of Feuerbach.[2] Likewise, Professor G. Sergi[3] seeks to prove that all religions, the highest as well as the lowest, are 'absurd, pathological and harmful to progress; being merely a collection of superstitious beliefs and superstitious forms of worship'. A similar view quite prevalent in all ages, is that religion is a fraudulent invention of crafty priests and rulers, imposed upon the ignorant and superstitious masses, who believed it to be the highest truth. This view became very popular during the period of the French Revolution. Thomas Hobbes defines religion as 'superstition sanctioned by the state',[4] while other thinkers regard religion, even in its crudest beginnings, as the admirable manifestation of God in man.

Coming next to the etymological meaning of the word, we will also consider here some definitions which are similar to the etymological definition of Lactantius, because they all take religion to be a bond that determines the proper relationship between man and the Higher Power or God.

The earliest attempt to define religion through the help of the etymological meaning of the word, was that of Cicero; the force of his derivation appears to drive him to the conclusion that religion is the worship of gods. He divides the word into two parts *re* and *legere*, meaning to 'take up, consider, ponder', i.e. 'having a care' for the gods. Max Müller[5] thought that this was the correct etymology and

[1] Moses, J., AJRPE., I, pp. 220ff.

[2] OGR., pp. 5–8.

[3] Quoted by Moses, loc. cit., and also by Leuba, op. cit., p. 24.

[4] Quoted by Moses, loc. cit.

[5] NR., p. 36. For a discussion of the etymology see the following:— Réville, A., *Prolegomena of the History of Religions*, Eng. tr., London, 1884, pp. 2-3; Müller, F. Max, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, London, 1898,

said that 'in its first conception the word can only have meant respect, care, reverence'. The other derivation is supported by Servius, Lactantius and others, who derive it from *re-ligare*, to 'bind to', i.e. forging a link between mankind and the gods.

This latter etymology became the more generally accepted and, through the influence of Augustine, was adopted by the theologians of the Middle Ages. A. Réville thinks that deriving the word religion from *re-ligare*, 'to bind', is more correct, but remarks that both derivations amount practically to the same thing.[1] Max Müller admits that the Lactantian derivation is not questionable from a purely philological point of view, but says that 'the real objection' to the acceptance of this etymology 'is the fact, that in classical Latin, *religare* is never used in the sense of binding or holding back'.[2]

This statement has been flatly contradicted by Professor Flint,[3] who says that 'binding or holding back or behind, or fast is its common meaning in classical Latin' and adds that the root *religare* is used in this sense by 'Cicero, Suetonius, Virgil, Horace and Ovid'. One more argument[4] in favour of deriving 'religion' from the root meaning 'to bind', is pointed out to be that this etymology suits the idea of religion far better in its simple beginnings. On the whole this derivation has been the more favoured one.

Whether we accept the one or the other of these two derivations, the question of the origin of religion and the clue to the proper definition of the word, remains as obscure as ever. And this is now recognized to be quite natural for the simple reason that religious ideas must have existed centuries before they had come to be called by any specific name. The Sanskrit language has yet to find a word for

pp. 10–12; and *Natural Religion*, London, 1898, pp. 33–43; Jastrow, M. Jr., *The Study of Religion*, London, 1901, pp. 130–33; and EB., s.v. Religion.

1 loc. cit. 2 NR., pp. 34-5.

3 *Chamber's Ency.*, London, 1908, s.v. Religion.

4 *The Catholic Ency.*, N.Y., 1911, s.v. Religion.

this phenomenon.[1] It was only during the period when the science of comparative philology was still young, that some of its devotees had very confidently expected it to solve all the problems of the history of man. This was followed by a reaction which looked with suspicion upon everything that was sought to be proved by philological evidence; and at one time it looked as if the work of some of the greatest promoters of the science of religion, notably Max Müller and A. Kuhn, would crumble to dust, because they had built on the foundations of comparative philology. Lately, however, the limits of influence of this science have been properly defined, and the value of its evidence has consequently increased.

As pointed out above, Réville accepts the derivation of Lactantius, and his own definition shows clear signs of having been influenced by it. He defines religion as the 'determination of human life by the sentiment of a bond uniting the human mind to that mysterious mind whose domination of the world and of itself it recognizes and to whom it delights in feeling itself united'.[2] To this definition there are three objections. Firstly, the phases of religion to which this definition refers may be found in the religion of the cultured races, but not in that of primitive peoples. Secondly, although religion exercises a great influence upon savages, it cannot be said to 'determine' their life, and the recognition of a 'mysterious mind' dominating the world is possible among civilized people only. Thirdly, the feeling of delight at the supposed union between man and the mysterious mind is too high a sentiment for the undeveloped mind of primitive races.[3]

Herder's definition of religion 'as the means of establishing man's proper relationship to the divine order of things',[4]

[1] Müller, NR., pp. 94–6.
[2] Réville, A., op. cit., p. 25.
[3] Jastrow, M. Jr., op. cit., p. 164.
[4] Cited by Jastrow, op. cit., p. 147.

has the merit of not mentioning the feeling of delight, but otherwise it is practically the same as that of Réville with some change of phraseology. Instead of the 'mysterious mind' we have here 'the divine order of things', and instead of a 'sentiment of a bond' that unites, we have here 'the means of establishing' the 'proper relationship'. Upton's definition[1] that 'the felt relationship in which the finite self-consciousness stands to the immanent and universal ground of all being constitutes religion' is saying the same thing in an obscure manner and adding to this the feeling of dependence. D'Alviella[2] arrives at the following definition: 'Religion is the conception man forms of his relations with the superhuman and mysterious powers on which he believes himself to depend.' The definition of Thouless (R.K.) that 'religion is a felt practical relationship with what is believed in as a superhuman being or beings'[3] may also be mentioned here.

We come next to philosophical definitions; we call them philosophical for the simple reason that their authors were rather philosophers than merely students of religion. For a very long time religion and philosophy were regarded as inseparable; sometimes they were even thought to be identical. It is in comparatively recent times that religion and the study of it have become distinguished from philosophy. It was due to this supposed inseparability of religion and philosophy that we find philosophers speculating upon the origin and essence of religion, and thus we have certain definitions which we have here called philosophical. These are much more systematic and scientific than any that had gone before, for these philosophers are in fact the real precursors of modern scientific method. There were theologians, perhaps more numerous and more learned, at any rate more orthodox and uncompromising, whose

[1] Upton, C. B., *The Bases of Religious Belief*, London, 1894, p. 18.

[2] *The Origin and Growth of the Conception of God*, London, 1892, p. 47.

[3] *An Introduction to the Psychology of Religion*, Cambridge, 1923, pp. 1–4.

primary duty was to study religion, but they had no questions to ask to which replies were not to be found in the scriptures. Thus the investigation of the nature of religion was left to the philosophers alone, even though they generally regarded religion as subordinate to philosophy.

The natural consequence of this relegation of religion to a subordinate position was that it was interpreted in the light of philosophy, and the definitions of some at least of the philosophers are ethical or metaphysical in character. Thus Spinoza says that the test of religious dogmas consists in their capacity to induce men to lead pious lives,[1] and Kant simply declares that 'religion is morality', i.e. according to him 'looking upon all our moral duties as divine commands, constitutes religion'.[2] Again, when Fichte[3] defines religion as knowledge, or Hegel,[4] in opposition to Schleiermacher, defines it as freedom; or when Comte says that man is the only true object of religious knowledge, it requires no argument to show that these are purely idealistic definitions of religion, telling us what religion, in the opinion of these various philosophers, ought to be, rather than what it actually was when it originated.

Seneca's definition[5] that religion is 'to know God and to imitate him', takes for granted the existence of one God and man's consciousness of His existence, without considering how this consciousness arose. Again Bishop Butler's definition[6] that religion is 'the belief in one God or Creator or Moral Governor of the world and a future state of retribution' seems to be suggested by the principles of Christianity only and cannot be applied to primitive religions, or even to some of the civilized religions.

There is also a group of definitions which are neither historical nor philosophical, and it needs but little comment to show that they are perfectly inadequate as definitions.

[1] Cited by Jastrow, op. cit., p. 133.
[2] Müller, OGR., p. 14. [3] ibid. [4] ibid., p. 19.
[5] Cited by Hopkins, E. W., *History of Religions*, N.Y., 1918, pp. 3–6.
[6] ibid.

According to the so-called psychological definition religion is 'the endeavour to secure the recognition of socially recognized values, through specific actions, that are believed to evoke some agency different from the ego of the individual, or from other merely human beings, and that imply a feeling of dependence upon this agency'.[1]

The majority of words and phrases used in this definition would require lengthy explanations before it can be made intelligible and clear in its meaning. Durkheim the sociologist, on the other hand, defines religion as follows:

'When a certain number of sacred things sustain relations of co-ordination or subordination with each other in such a way as to form a system having a certain unity, but which is not comprised within any other system of the same sort, the totality of these beliefs and their corresponding rites constitute a religion.'[2] The author considers this definition as only preliminary and so gives the following as a complete one.

'A religion is a united system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.'[3] He also adds that the second element is no less essential than the first; because, by showing that the idea of religion is inseparable from that of the Church, he makes it clear that religion should be 'an eminently collective thing'. However useful this definition of religion may be to a sociologist, it is hardly of any value to a student of religion, since it can be applied to but few early religions. Although, as Dr. Marett has pointed out, 'religion in its psychological aspect is a mode of social behaviour',[4] it would not be easy to find 'one single moral community' or an organized 'church' wherever religion

[1] Hopkins, op. cit., p. 5.

[2] Durkheim, E., *Elementary forms of Religious Life*, Eng. tr., London, 1915, p. 41.

[3] ibid., p. 47.

[4] *Threshold of Religion*, 1909, p. xi.

exists. Moreover, the presupposition in all known religious beliefs of a 'classification of all things, real and ideal, of which men think, into two classes or opposed groups', which the author calls by the names 'profane' and 'sacred', is questionable.[1] It should be borne in mind that this definition is the result of the author's theory that totemism is a religious institution if not a religion proper and that it is the source of all religion. But Durkheim makes no attempt to prove such an universal character of totemism, and many enthusiastic supporters of totemism do not regard it as a religion; e.g. F. B. Jevons.[2]

Max Müller defined religion as 'a longing after the infinite' or 'a mental faculty which enables man to apprehend the infinite'. This definition, together with Max Müller's theory of 'the perception of the infinite' as the origin of religion, found but few followers in his day, although he adhered to it in a somewhat modified form throughout his life, and it is today of little consequence.

It was however, not until the science of anthropology came to our help, that a truly scientific attempt to define as well as to explain the origin of religion was made. It is a fact that 'on the whole the anthropologists have defined religion in better terms than have the students of comparative religion'. They at least know, says Professor Hopkins, 'that the Andaman Islander does not apprehend the infinite, or feel himself delightfully united to a mysterious mind'.[3] As a result, definitions of such anthropologists as Tylor and Frazer are considered to be the simplest and most convenient for working purposes. Tylor in his *Primitive Culture* proposes 'the belief in spiritual beings' as a 'minimum definition'. One can understand the highly objectionable phrase 'spiritual beings' from the fact that the author maintained the theory of animism as explaining the origin of religion. Even though it is quite true that early men, sooner or later, came to believe in 'spiritual beings',

[1] Durkheim, op. cit., p. 37.
[2] See ERE., 'Totemism'.
[3] Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

as distinguished from material and quasi-material things, it is not true to say that 'spiritual beings' were the only objects of their belief. Animism certainly plays an important part in religious belief, but it by no means embraces the whole of it.

It must be noted here, that Tylor does not reckon with any practices (or worship) by which the belief is expressed; while, according to Sir James Frazer, belief and worship are equally essential. By religion Frazer understands 'a proposition or conciliation of powers superior to man which are believed to direct or control the course of nature and of human life'.[1] By 'powers' he means 'conscious or personal agents'.[2] On the other hand Professor Allen Menzies, by defining religion as 'worship of unseen powers from a sense of need',[3] appears to give the first place to worship, perhaps thinking that there can be no worship without belief.

The definition given by Professor Jastrow is very much like a combination of those of Frazer and Menzies given above. According to him religion consists of three elements:

(1) the natural recognition of a Power or Powers beyond our control,

(2) the feeling of dependence upon the Power or Powers,

(3) entering into relation with this Power or Powers.

Uniting these elements into a single proposition, he defines religion 'as the natural belief in a Power or Powers beyond our control, and upon whom we feel ourselves dependent; which belief and feeling of dependence prompted:

(1) to organization,

(2) to specific acts

and (3) to the regulation of conduct, with a view to establishing favourable relations between ourselves and the Power or Powers in question'.[4]

[1] GB., 2nd ed., I, p. 63. [2] ibid. [3] *History of Religion*, 1895, p. 16.
[4] *The Study of Religion*, pp. 171-2.

This is indeed an admirable analysis of the religious sentiment and one or more of these elements are to be found in each of the following definitions in some form or other:

'Religion' means 'the aggregate of all those phenomena which are invariably termed religious, in contradistinction to ethical, aesthetical, political and others, i.e..... those manifestations of the human mind in words, deeds, customs and institutions, which testify to man's belief in the superhuman, and serve to bring him into relation with it.'—C.P. Tiele.[1]

'Religion signifies the conception of a superior authority, whose potency man feels himself constrained to acknowledge and invoke.'—L. H. Jordan.[2]

'Religion is the belief in invisible, superhuman powers (or a Power) which are (is) conceived of after the analogy of the human spirits on which (whom) man regards himself as dependent for his well-being, and to which (whom) he is at least in some sense responsible for his conduct, together with the feelings and practices which naturally follow from such a belief.'—G. T. Ladd.[3] Thus, the author says, the lowest form of religion is most properly denominated a 'vague and unreflecting spiritism'.

Religion is 'man's faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability of life and which he expresses in acts of worship and service'.—G. Galloway.[4]

'*Religion ist der Glaube an geistige, ausser und über der Sphäre des Mensches waltende, Wesen oder Mächte, das Gefühl der Abhängigkeit von denselben und das Bedürfnis, sich mit ihnen in Einklang zu setzen.*'—L. von Schröder.[5]

'What is common to all religions is belief in a supernatural power and an adjustment of human activities to

[1] *Elements of the Science of Religion*, London, 1897, I, p. 4.
[2] *Comparative Religion*, Edinburgh, 1905, p. 217.
[3] *The Philosophy of Religion*, 2 vols., London, 1906, I, p. 89.
[4] *The Philosophy of Religion*, Edinburgh, 1914, p. 184. [5] AR., I, p. 24.

the requirements of that power; such an adjustment as may enable the individual believer to exist more happily.'—E. W. Hopkins.[1] 'Religion' he says, in short 'is squaring human life with superhuman life.' This definition, Hopkins attempts to apply even to Buddhism, by making *karma* a superhuman power.[2]

'Religion means, on the one hand the body of belief entertained by men regarding the divine or supernatural powers, and, on the other, that sense of dependence on those powers which is expressed by word in the form of prayer and praise, or by act in the form of ritual and sacrifice.'—A. A. Macdonell.[3]

'Religion is the serious and social attitude of individuals or communities toward the power or powers which they conceive as having ultimate control over their interests and destinies.'—J. B. Pratt.[4]

It is needless to quote any more definitions of this type. Those quoted make it sufficiently clear how belief in and entering into relation with a higher and uncoercible Power (or Powers) are recognized to be the chief constituents of religion. 'The sense of dependence' is indeed an important factor in the origin as well as growth of religion, but since it only gives a cause of the origin of religion and not so much a constituent element of it, it need not be included in a definition. And even as a cause of the origin of religion, 'the sense of dependence' is by no means the only one. Not to mention any others, the sense of what is expressed by the term 'awe' must at least be reckoned with.

It will probably be admitted that the above two elements are *sufficient* to constitute religion, but it does not appear that they can be regarded as *necessary* in every case. Wherever these two elements, which may for the sake of brevity be called belief and worship, exist, we might unhesitatingly declare that there a religion exists. But to say

[1] op. cit., pp. 1-2. [2] ibid. [3] ERE., 'Vedic Religion'.
[4] *Religious Consciousness*, N.Y., 1923, p. 2.

that the contrary also must hold true would be going too far. It would be nothing short of laying down a rule that every religion, which can be called a religion, must consist of belief in, as well as worship of, some superhuman power. We would thus give the word religion a meaning which it does not possess, which would be to exceed the function of a definition. Defining a term, so far as we understand it, does not mean giving it a new meaning, even though it be the most suitable or logical, but rather to state shortly but accurately what is commonly understood by that term.

It is historically true that almost all religions do contain both belief in and worship of a Power or Powers beyond. But to these there is, although only one, a very important exception. True Buddhism recognizes neither belief in nor worship of any Power or Powers beyond, and it has been known as a religion—one of the noblest at that—for more than 2,000 years. Thus, to accept any of the last group of definitions as an universal definition of religion (as some of their authors undoubtedly intended them to be) would be to declare that everyone who has called and still calls Buddhism a religion, has been and is wrong.[1]

Many attempts have been made to define religion in general and to make the definition applicable to Buddhism also. But so long as either belief in or worship of a Power or Powers beyond (or both) is included in the definition, the attempt is destined to fail. Nobody has however been bold enough to declare that Buddhism is not a religion. Originally, it is true, Buddhism was only a heterodox school of Brahmanical or Upanishadic philosophy and a sort of a revolt against Brahmanical ritualism. But later it evolved

[1] Crawley admits that Frazer's definition of religion is 'the best definition as yet given but..that it fails to include atheistic Buddhism and Positivism, and many phenomena which are religious in everything but the assumption of personality or consciousness in the object'.—*The Tree of Life*, London, 1905, p. 186. See also the same author's 'The Origin and function of Religion' in *Sociological Papers*, London, 1906, III, p. 244. See also Durkheim's lucid comment on this point in his *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Eng. tr., London, n.d., pp. 30ff.

a system of principles which turned it into a religion, although a religion which is still highly philosophical and ethical.[1]

So, if we do not want to define and determine the meaning of the word religion arbitrarily, and if we cannot declare that Buddhism is not and never was a religion, it is clear that we must look for other elements than belief in and worship of some superhuman Power or Powers, which constitute religion universally. We will briefly indicate what in our opinion are the universal elements of religion.

The first fact about every religion is that it is and must be a social institution.[2] Every religion is followed by a group of persons, who acknowledge their allegiance to that religion, explicitly or implicitly. Every religion also (in its own fashion) determines the relation of the individual to the society of which he is a member. It is due to this social character of religion that ethics becomes so closely associated with it.

Secondly, every religion has certain principles or doctrines and enjoins certain beliefs which form a part of that religion. Thus, e.g. Judaism, Christianity and Mohamedanism believe in the existence of God. So every Jew, Christian or Mohamedan is expected and assumed to believe in God. Buddhism does not believe in the existence of God or soul, but believes in the doctrines of transmigration (*saṁsāra*) and retribution (*karma*); while Zoroastrianism believes in two spirits, viz. the spirit of goodness (Ahura Mazda or Ormazd) and the spirit of evil (Angra Mainyu or Ahriman). Brahmanism believed in heaven (*svarga*), Buddhism believes in 'extinction' (*nirvāṇa*), Mohamedanism in the day of judgment.

Thirdly, every religion has some rules of conduct,[3] which

[1] For an additional argument against the above definitions see Durkheim, op. cit., p. 34f.

[2] Carpenter, *Comparative Religion*, 1913 (?), p. 78.

[3] cf. *ācāra prabhavo dharmaḥ*—MB. Anu. CIV, 157. *ācāra paramo dharmaḥ*. —Manu, I, 108.

are based upon its principles, doctrines and beliefs and which aim at furthering the happiness of the individual in this life, or in the next, or in both.[1] This element again shows the social character of religion, since many if not most of these rules assume man to be a member of a society. The Buddha believed that life was misery and attaining Nirvāṇa meant extinction of life and with it of misery. The Buddha then declared the Eight-fold Path,[2] which leads to the extinction of misery or suffering. Hinduism lays it down that by sacrifices one obtains *svarga*, but by the knowledge of the Brahman (n.) one attains perfect bliss from which there is no return to life. This religion attaches more importance to life after death, and thus rules of conduct in this life are assigned a subordinate place. According to Zoroastrianism it is the duty of man to uphold the forces of truth, while Christ taught to love and be merciful.

These three elements in our opinion constitute what is universally known as religion. Combining them in a single proposition, religion may be defined somewhat as follows:

'A religion is a social institution, having a set of principles, doctrines, beliefs and practices, and certain more or less imperative rules of conduct which are in accordance with those principles, doctrines and beliefs and which aim at furthering human happiness.' Thus a person who says that he belongs to a particular religion, belongs to a community which professes that religion, holds those beliefs and follows the rules of conduct which he believes to be conducive to his and to the community's happiness.

It will be readily seen that the above definition is somewhat similar to that of Durkheim already given. We have objected to Durkheim's division of things into 'sacred' and 'profane', a division suggested by the importance he gave to totemism as the origin of all religions, as well as to his use of the phrase 'moral community called a church'. It

[1] Sometimes however this may be negatively expressed as freedom from misery. Not conforming to these rules is also believed to lead to suffering.

[2] cf. Jolly, J., 'Ethics and Morality (Hindu)', ERE., v, p. 497a.

is not true that 'sacred things' or 'things set apart or forbidden' play as important a part in, and form as essential a part of all religions, as they certainly do of the religion of the totemistic tribes. What is common however, is, that we along with Durkheim believe that religion consists of beliefs and practices, and that these beliefs and practices unite all those who adhere to them into one single moral community, whether called a church or not. These beliefs and practices again are not necessarily connected with a belief in, and entering into relation with a Higher Power or Powers.

Although Durkheim thinks that 'religion is inseparable from the idea of a church', he appears to introduce this element in his definition in order to distinguish religion from magic, because he emphatically declares, '*There is no Church of magic*'. Apart from the objectionable character of the idea already pointed out, its inclusion in our definition is unnecessary since the words 'social institution' adequately serve the purpose. It might be questioned if all magic is *anti*-social, but that it is *non*-social seems to be generally admitted.[1]

Hartland says: 'When all is said, however, religion is (ideally, at least) social—that is to say, moral—in its aims and tendencies, whereas magic lends itself to individualist aims. Religion binds the society together by raising the individual above himself, and teaching him to subordinate his desires and actions to the general good; magic has no compunction in assisting to carry out the wishes of the individual, though they may be contrary to the interests of the society as a whole. To that extent it is disruptive, anti-social, immoral...'[2]

The above definition, however, is not of much practical use. The only purpose it is meant to serve is to give the

[1] cf. Durkheim, op. cit., p. 43; and Hubert and Mauss, 'Théorie Générale de la Magie' in *Année Sociologique*, VIII, p. 83f.

[2] Hartland, E. S., *Ritual and Belief*, London, 1914, pp. 88-9; cf. also pp. 66–8.

generally current conception conveyed by the term 'religion'. It is hardly necessary to show that our definition is applicable to all existing religions, including some of the lowest. Moreover, we believe that it will be equally applicable to those faiths that may come into existence in future, and which, because they do not recognize the existence of a Power or Powers beyond, should not be denied the name of religion.

In the following chapter, we will consider what was the most probable origin of religion, and for this purpose we might choose any of the last-mentioned group of definitions. For this reason, we may say at once that the origin of religion, as well as of magic, lies in the belief in or the recognition of the existence of a Power or Powers beyond. There is however, a clear difference between the Powers of magic and those of religion, although both are believed to be more powerful than man. The former are, as a rule, placable, the latter are not; and while magical practices are coercive and generally use the language of command, the religious practices are propitiatory and use the language of supplication. The religious powers may sometimes degenerate and approximate to the magical, but purely magical powers never become gods proper. Thus for this purpose we may define religion as '*the belief in or recognition of a higher and uncoercible Power or Powers*'. We have purposely excluded worship from this definition, because, although belief by itself cannot constitute religion, it is the primary element in its growth.

The Sanskrit language has no word equivalent to what is understood by religion. Nor is there an English or even a European equivalent for the Sanskrit word *dharma*, which indeed is the nearest term which expresses the sense of the word religion. We have attempted to define the word religion, because although it has been variously defined, there is some definite sense expressed by the term. The word *dharma*, on the other hand, has no such even approximately certain meaning, and unlike the word religion it can be used

in various senses according to the context. Thus it may mean law, justice, morality, custom, duty, established order, virtue, and so on. This word *dharma* is not, however, found in the *Ṛigveda*.• There we have the words *dharman* (m.) meaning 'bearer', 'preserver', 'maintainer', or 'ordainer' and (n.) meaning 'support', 'foundation', 'hold', etc.[1]

The word *dharma* is commonly derived as '*dhārayate iti dharmaḥ*', 'that which holds (together) or bears is Dharma';[2] and rules of morality, custom as well as law, are supposed to form part of it. The above derivation is found even in the *Mahābhārata*:

'*dhāraṇād dharmam ityāhuḥ*
*dharmo dhārayate prajaḥ*
*yatsyād dhāraṇa saṁyuktam*
*sa dharma iti niścayaḥ.*'[3]

It is, however, used in a very vague sense and this is well illustrated by Manu's definition of it:

'*Vedaḥ smṛtiḥ sadācāraḥ*
*svasya ca priyamātmānaḥ*
*etac catur vidham prāhuḥ*
*sākṣād dharmasya lakṣaṇam.*'[4]

In common use it is equivalent to religion—morality, but occasionally one of the two predominates over the other: e.g. in '*svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ*',[5] *dharma* is very nearly equal to religion, while in the following Pāli verse, it is morality that is the dominating factor:

'*adhammo nirayam neti*
*dhammo pāpeti suggatim.*'[6]

This Pāli equivalent (*dhamma*) of the Sk. *dharma*, is also used in the various different senses as in Sanskrit, but in

[1] For examples see Petersberg, s. vv. *dharma* and *dharman*.
[2] cf. with the etymology of the word 'religion' discussed above.
[3] Karṇa, LXIX, 59. [4] Manu, II, 12.
[5] *Bhagavadgītā*, III, 35.
[6] *Therā-Theri Gāthā*, ed. Oldenberg and Pischel, London, 1883, I, p. 304.

addition it becomes a very important technical term in Buddhist philosophy.[1]

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In addition see the works referred to in the footnotes.

[1] For full information and discussion see Magdalene and Wilhelm Geiger, 'Pāli Dhamma', in *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil-hist. Kl., XXXI, 1. Munich, 1921; and Stcherbatsky, Th., *The Central Conception of Buddhism and the meaning of the word 'Dharma'*, London, 1923, especially pp. 1–6, 73f.

[2] This work came to hand when the major part of this chapter was already written.

## CHAPTER II

# THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION

THE problem of the origin of religion is inextricably linked up with the problem of the origin of man himself and the former cannot be very satisfactorily explained without offering some explanation of the latter. Moreover, if we consider the two problems together, we get a clearer and a more exact insight into the nature of the problem before us; for the answer to the question: What was the origin of man? offers a very useful clue to answer the question: What was the origin of religion? Now, the possible number of answers that can be given to the first question is three, and it will be found that the various theories which try to explain the origin of religion can be—more or less correctly—grouped under one or other of these three answers.

(1) The first, the oldest and for a very long time the most commonly believed in, was the answer that man was created by some supreme being, at some definite period of time, possessing certain definite qualities, mental and physical, as a species distinct and differentiated from, and higher than, all other existing species and with the knowledge of such creation by that supreme being. With this answer is associated the revelation theory of the origin of religion, according to which a living God revealed to men a certain number of religious truths by a supernatural phenomenon. This *a priori* theory is found in almost all great religions of the world. The Vedas themselves are supposed to have been revealed to the ancient seers.

(2) The second answer is that man is the result of the process of evolution pure and simple. As a result of a revolution brought about by this theory in the field of scientific thought, the following theories of the origin of religion were propounded:

(*a*) Fetishism of C. de Brosses.[1]
(*b*) Animism of E. B. Tylor.
(*c*) Ancestor worship of H. Spencer.[2]
(*d*) Totemism of F. B. Jevons.
(*e*) Frazer's theory of magic.

(3) The third and the last answer is that man is the product of both creation and evolution. With this theory can be associated the so-called composite theory of the origin of religion, first systematically formulated by L. H. Jordan in his *Comparative Religion*. Instead of maintaining with Max Müller that man is endowed with a special 'faculty' in virtue of which he is compelled to seek after the divine, the representatives of the composite theory merely lay emphasis upon the fact that every man exhibits in himself the persistent operation of an impulse that turns his thoughts towards God. But at the same time it is said that they perceive and admit that man is a part of nature, susceptible to its influences and governed by its laws.[3]

The first answer, and with it the theory of revelation, is so thoroughly unscientific and has today such a small number of followers, that it can be dismissed without any discussion.[4] According to Fechner, belief in God rests upon divine revelation, which is mainly internal but partly external also. Nature, he argues, is so ordered as to make men recognize the existence of a power above them. Thus the origin of belief in God was the working of original divine inspiration through nature and the human soul.[5]

[1] *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches*, Paris, 1760.

[2] See Jordan, L. H., *Comparative Religion*, Edin., 1905, for this classification. He gives the name Spiritism to Spencer's theory of 'ancestor worship'; but as that term is used in other senses, it is avoided here.

[3] Jordan, op. cit., pp. 233–48.

[4] 'In fact the religious schools which maintain the truth of a primitive revelation are guided by a very evident theological interest.'—Réville, A., *Prolegomena*, p. 36.

[5] Tiele, C. P., *Elements of the Science of Religion*, 1898, II, pp. 210-11; O. Pfleiderer, *Religiöse Philosophie*, II, p. 622, *Geschichte der Religiöse Philosophie*, 2nd ed., pp. 55, 575f.

This was certainly an advance upon the pure revelation theory, in so far as it allows the impressions made by nature some share in the origin of the belief in God, but inasmuch as nature itself is so ordered to impress, and the human mind to receive the impressions, so as ultimately to come to the sure and necessary conclusion of the existence of God, it is hardly different from the revelation theory and hardly any the less unscientific.

The third answer—we take the third before the second, because we are going to deal with the second at greater length hereafter—and with it the composite theory will, we think, meet with the same fate as the theory of revelation, in spite of the fact that Jordan believes that the number of supporters of the Composite Theory is steadily growing.[1] For, in our opinion, it would be far better to assume divine intervention—if it must be assumed—in everything that one sees, feels or does, in every event that happens and in everything that is created, than to assume it in one particular instance, namely the soul of man with the 'ineradicable element' having the 'universal propensity' to recognize and strive to know God, which is indistinguishable from the soul.

Nothing can be more revolting than the fact that such outside intervention should be assumed at a time when the most stray and at first sight the most unaccountable occurrences in nature can be seen to have happened as a result of an operation of a fixed law, when the most complicated human structure can be demonstrated to have grown out of simple beginnings—which is admitted by the author of this theory. It is better frankly to admit one's incapacity to solve the problem than to have recourse to the unscientific and ready-made answer of divine intervention. It must be stated here that we do not question the existence of God, but what we do not and cannot believe in is the manner of reasoning by which it is held that the

[1] Jordan, op. cit., p. 251.

human mind could not have been the product of a natural process even though every other thing can be proved to be, and that the human mind must have been implanted in man by God. This mind, thus implanted, conceives of religion as a ' psychological necessity '.[1]

We admit that the birth of religion—i.e. the recognition or consciousness by man of the existence of some power or powers beyond him—is a matter of ' psychological necessity ', but what we do not admit is, that given sufficient time and scope for development, the human mind and with it the consciousness of powers beyond cannot be evolved without direct divine intervention.

We will now discuss briefly the theories grouped under the second answer.

(*a*) *Fetishism.*—Fetishism is closely allied to and almost coexistent with animism. The term is derived from the Portuguese word *feitiço*, of uncertain meaning. It is often explained as meaning a ' charm ' or ' something made by art ' and is applied to any object large or small, natural or artificial, regarded as possessing consciousness, volition, and supernatural qualities, but especially magical power. The fetish, wherever it exists, is believed to have been inhabited by a spirit.

The term is variously defined,[2] but the best definition is given by Tylor. According to him, ' Fetishism is a doctrine of spirits embodied in or attached to certain material objects through which the spirits are believed to act and as a result of which each separate object being now treated as having personal consciousness and power is worshipped or ill-treated with reference to its past or present behaviour to its votaries '.[3] This definition, Aston[4] truly urges, ' deserves general acceptance, if we are not to consign the word to the terminological scrap-heap as so blurred and disfigured by

[1] Menzies, A., quoted by Jordan, loc. cit.

[2] See Haddon, A. C., *Magic and Fetishism*, London, 1906, pp. 64ff; ' Fetishism ' in EB. ; and ERE., V, p. 894f.

[3] PC., 6th ed., II, p. 145f. [4] ' Fetishism,' ERE., V, p. 894.

indiscriminate use that it is unserviceable and misleading'. This definition again is very near to what was understood by de Brosses,[1] who first introduced the term. According to him fetishism is '*le culte de certains objets terrestres et matériels*'.[2]

Fetishism is indeed prevalent all over the world and traces of it can be found in almost all religions, higher as well as lower; but when offered as a theory in explanation of the origin of religion, it is extremely unsatisfactory. This is now generally admitted and there is, at the present time, hardly a single serious supporter of this theory. It is therefore sufficient to remark that fetish-worship is only one of the many forms in which a man's attitude towards powers beyond is expressed, and that it nowhere constitutes the whole of religion. However difficult it may be 'to point out where fetishism ends and, e.g. nature-worship begins',[3] it can hardly be disputed that all nature-gods were not originally mere fetishes.

Moreover, fetishism is much more magical in character than religious. If the fetish fails to satisfy the worshipper, it may be discarded and another substituted in its place. Sometimes even offerings may be made to a fetish or it may be invoked by prayer, but on the other hand it may be severely castigated if it fail to respond to its owner's desires. A fetish is always a material object, inhabited by a spirit which is always subservient to an individual owner, or a tribe, and never attains to a position of a god proper who is conceived as a patron to be invoked by a prayer.

(*b*) *Animism.*—The theory of animism is associated with the name of Tylor and means a belief that everything in nature has a soul or a spirit residing in it, which is distinct and different in quality from the physical object. The savage believes that the spirit can move away from the body and can perform acts like man himself. According to

[1] *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches.*

[2] Quoted by Aston, in ERE., loc. cit.

[3] Haddon, op. cit., p. 91f.

Tylor animism arose as a result of 'two groups of biological problems present to the mind of the early man:

'(1) What is it makes the difference between a living body and a dead one; what causes waking, sleep, trance, disease and death?

'(2) What are these human shapes which appear in dreams and visions?'[1]

This theory and Tylor's great work where it is propounded, attracted a great deal of attention. It certainly gives a correct explanation of many beliefs and practices of races both savage and civilized. It is also undeniable that it is a phenomenon of world-wide importance and constitutes an important factor in the making of religion. But a careful study of animism as a form of human belief has also led authorities to the conclusion that animism as a theory of the origin of religion is inadequate. The following are the chief objections:

Firstly, animism, as understood by Tylor, is not the most primitive attitude of mind. It is not true to say that the conception of a power beyond was suggested by a belief in spirits as distinguished from material or quasi-material objects. The notion of immaterial, wandering spirit cannot be attained without considerable reflection extended over a prolonged period of time, nor does the most primitive savage possess so clear an idea of spirit as distinguished from body as is implied by this theory.[2]

Secondly, animism offers only a one-sided explanation in disregarding cases of direct nature-worship without any belief in spirits.[3]

[1] PC., 6th edition, I, p. 428.

[2] Hopkins, E. W., *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, New Haven, 1923, p. 3; Edwards, D. M., *The Philosophy of Religion*, London, 1924, pp. 38-9. 'While animism is doubtless primitive, it does not by any means form the origin of all ideas about higher beings. Many animistic conceptions are of comparatively late growth.'—Chantepie de la Saussaye, *The Religion of the Teutons*, Boston and London, 1902, p. 289; see also, Hartland, E. S., *Ritual and Belief*, London, 1914, pp. 26ff.

[3] Hopkins, op. cit.; Marett, R. R., *The Threshold of Religion*, 2nd ed., London, 1914, p. 9. 'Supernatural is no part of Animism pure and simple,

Thirdly, although belief in souls is everywhere found, it does not by itself constitute the whole of religion.[1]

Fourthly, even if animism is accepted to hold true as a belief, it is still necessary to find a psychological motive to explain why men should seek to establish relations with some spirits and not with others.[2]

(*c*) *Ancestor-worship or Ghost-worship.*—This theory, which postulates that the worship of the dead ancestors forms the basis of all religion, is usually associated with the name of Herbert Spencer. According to him, 'anything which transcends the ordinary, a savage thinks of as supernatural or divine, the remarkable man among the rest. This remarkable man may be a chief famed for strength or bravery; or powerful because he possesses some other quality to an extraordinary degree. For these powers of his, he is regarded with increased awe after his death; and the propitiation of his ghost, becoming greater than the propitiation of ghosts less feared, develops into an established worship.... Using the phrase ancestor-worship in its broadest sense as comprehending all worship of the dead, be they of the same blood or not, we conclude that ancestor-worship is the root of every religion.'[3]

With regard to this theory, it may be said at once that even among the most barbaric people there has always been a difference between man's attitude towards gods and towards the ghosts of ancestors. There might be examples of some ancestors who have, after a very long time, come to be looked upon as gods, but it is certain that the conception of god was not born of such a process, nor can it be shown that gods of every religion, were, originally, merely

which ascribes human, but not superhuman, powers to nonhuman beings.'—Edwards, op. cit., p. 38.

[1] Chantepie de la Saussaye, op. cit.; Selbie, W. B., *The Psychology of Religion*, Oxford, 1924, pp. 28ff; see also Thomas, N. W., 'Animism,' EB., p. 54*b*, and Tiele, C. P., *Outline of the History of Religion*, Eng. tr., London, 1884, p. 9.

[2] Edwards, op. cit., p. 37.

[3] *The Principles of Sociology*, London, 1885, I, p. 411.

ghosts of the dead ancestors. 'It never happened', says Jevons, 'that the spirits of the dead are conceived to be gods. Man is dependent on the gods, but the spirits of his dead ancestors are dependent upon him';[1] and Professor Edwards concludes: 'The deification of ancestors is far too narrow a basis on which to rear the structure of religion.'[2]

(*d*) *Totemism.*—Totemism as found in America and Australia, where it appears to be very highly developed, is a form of social organization composed of clans or tribes. These tribes are distinguished by the name of some species of animal or plant, or more rarely of some other natural phenomenon such as the sun, rain, etc. This species or object which becomes the name of the clan is conceived as mystically related to every individual of the clan to whom the totem is considered as helpful. Thus it becomes a subject of religious or quasi-religious emotion. The members of the clan, except in certain cases, as of ceremonial and self-defence, are forbidden to injure or kill it, or if an eatable to eat it. The members of a whole clan which has a totem in common, regard themselves of one blood, as descendants from the same totem which is claimed as the common ancestor. Therefore marriage and sexual intercourse within the clan are forbidden. Members of the same clan are entitled to mutual defence and protection and so is one clan entitled to help and protection from another clan having the same object or animal as totem.[3]

W. R. Smith[4] was the first to suggest that the origin of worship lay in totemism, and following him Jevons came to the conclusion that totemism, which is in his opinion the most primitive and a world-wide form of society, was the first form of the worship of external objects; and the totem or the tribal god was the only object of worship for a long time.[5] This belief in one tribal god he terms monotheism,

[1] *An Introduction to the History of Religion*, London, 1896, p. 196f.

[2] op. cit., p. 39.

[3] Hartland, E. S., 'Totemism,' ERE., XII, p. 394.

[4] *The Religion of the Semites*, London, 1885.

[5] *An Introduction to the History of Religion*, 2nd ed., London, 1902, pp. 99, 117, 411.

and regards polytheism as a relapse from the totemic monotheism.[1] Edwards suggests that it would be more accurate to call it monolatry.[2] Jevons, however, does not regard totemism as absolutely primitive since he speaks of a 'pre-totemic stage', but remarks that the nature of religious belief in that stage is entirely a matter of conjecture.[3]

More recently Durkheim the famous French sociologist held that totemism was the earliest form of religious belief and was the source of all religion.[4] According to this author religion is in the main an eminent expression of social life, characterized neither by the idea of the supernatural, nor by the idea of spiritual beings, but by that which is sacred. Every religion has a foundation in reality and no religion is false; religion is the source of science and philosophy as it is the source of all civilization. Neither is religion based on fear, but on happy confidence.[5]

Against this theory two serious objections have been taken: (1) that totemism is no religion and (2) that it is not found everywhere.[6]

With regard to the first objection Hartland observes: 'In strict acceptance of the term, totemism is not a religion. The respect of the clan for its totem arises out of the lack of power among primitive people to clearly distinguish man from animal...[But] although regarded with reverence and looked to for help, the totem is never, where totemism is not decadent, prayed to as a god or a person with powers which we call supernatural.'[7] Since our definition of religion does not require belief in what Hartland designates supernatural,

[1] ibid., p. 395: 'Totemism, which is...the worship of one god, declines into the worship of many gods.' 'Polytheism presupposes totemism: its existence is in itself proof of the existence of totemism in a previous stage.' —ibid., pp. 395, 411.

[2] op. cit., p. 42. [3] Jevons, op. cit., p. 413.

[4] *Elementary forms of Religious Life.*

[5] ibid., pp. 24–37, 223ff, 419ff.

[6] Edwards, op. cit., p. 43. Hartland, E. S., 'Totemism,' ERE., XII, p. 406f.

[7] op. cit., p. 407. 'Indeed, totemism cannot be called a religion at all though it is on the border line of religion.'—Edwards, op. cit., p. 42.

we, with Durkheim, have no hesitation in calling totemism a religion, although undoubtedly a lower one.[1] For totemism satisfies all our conditions. It is a social institution, holding certain definite beliefs and entailing certain obligations and duties on the members of the society.

The second objection is, however, very important and fatal to the theory. But an additional argument in favour of rejecting totemism as the origin of religion is that totemism itself is but a specialized form of a more primary element out of which religion originated; and since the universal existence of totemism has not yet been proved, we cannot say that that primary element always takes the form of totemism. Thus we must seek for the origin of religion in some pre-totemistic as in a pre-animistic element.

Moreover, the attitude of mind which gave rise to totemism is far from determined. The origin of totemism itself is very variously expressed, but failure clearly to distinguish man from animal is considered by some to be the most probable theory.[2] In our opinion, consciousness of a power or powers beyond is at the root of even totemism.

(*e*) *Magic.*—Sir James Frazer, holding that there is 'a fundamental distinction and even opposition of principle between magic and religion', formulated the view that 'in the evolution of thought, magic, as representing a lower intellectual stratum, has probably everywhere preceded religion'.[3] Frazer thus distinguishes two ages in human belief, viz. the age of magic and the age of religion. According to him the age of magic gives place to the age of religion when the falsehood and barrenness of magic become

[1] 'Totemism is not essentially religious if religion be held to involve worship of superhuman or extra-human beings; it has, however, in many cases coalesced with religious practices and ideas, and it is sometimes difficult to draw the line distinctly between it and religion proper.'—Toy, C. H., *Introduction to the History of Religions*, N.Y., London, etc., 1913, p. 176.

[2] ibid., pp. 224–32.

[3] GB., 2nd ed., I. p. xvi; 3rd ed., I. i, p. 237f.

obvious. As time goes on, 'the fallacy of magic becomes more and more apparent to the acuter minds, and is slowly displaced by religion; the magician renounces the attempt to control directly the processes of nature for the good of man, seeking to attain the same end indirectly by humbly confessing his dependence on invisible, mighty beings and appealing to them for all those things which he is in need of'.[1]

The more ancient and simpler character of magical beliefs was at one time universally accepted by anthropologists, and in the words of Marett 'its peculiar *provenance* was held to be completely known'.[2] This is, however, no longer the case. At present many anthropologists take the view that both magic and religion have a common root, and that they existed side by side in the most primitive times.[3] Thus Marett holds 'that magic and religion are differentiated out from a common plasm of crude beliefs about the awful and occult',[4] and Hartland declares that 'in the lowest societies of which we have any evidence, practices usually regarded as magical are distinguished from those regarded as religious. The mutual hostility of religion and magic, where it exists, is, in truth, the result of a later development'.[5]

It is clear from the above discussion that all the theories except that of Frazer are partially true. Neither fetishism, nor animism, nor ancestor-worship, nor totemism can explain the whole complex structure of religion. They are, each one of them, important features of religious belief, but any one of them is only a part and not the whole of religion. Religion did not arise simply out of fetish-worship, or out of

1 GB., I. i, pp. 222–40.

2 *The Threshold of Religion*, 2nd ed., 1914, p. 36.

3 Marett, op. cit., pp. 31ff; Hartland, E. S., *Ritual and Belief*, London, 1914, pp. 26ff; James, E. O., *An Introduction to Anthropology*, London, 1919, pp. 132ff; see also, Marett, 'Magic', ERE., VI, pp. 245ff; Selbie, op. cit., pp. 31ff; Edwards, op. cit., pp. 48ff.

4 Marett, op. cit., p. xi.

5 Hartland, op. cit., pp. 74-5.

belief in spiritual beings, or the dread of ghosts or the worship of natural phenomena or totems. There was a much more elementary substratum out of which all these different systems, including magic, were evolved. This substratum was the belief in various agencies or powers, which cannot be called either spirits, or ghosts, or anthropomorphic beings. The conception was as yet too vague to be described by any such specific names. We will now briefly describe how this may have come about.

It is now generally accepted that the theory of evolution holds good, and whatever creature man has immediately descended from, he was in the beginning a perfect savage.[1] His mind was hopelessly undeveloped; his ideas extremely confused and illogical; his fears, his acts, were still disconnected as children's are; in short he had not yet come to possess the faculty to think. Still in the scale of evolution he had advanced so far as to retain the impressions of events that had happened in the past. For generations together he must have continued more or less in the same state, until he could put these stray incidents side by side and begin to draw inferences. He had yet to learn the relative importance of things, and for this reason his inferences were bound to be highly illogical, his hopes and fears purely imaginary, his acts almost wholly instinctive. In this condition he could have had nothing that can be called religion in the proper sense of the word, but the germs out of which the curious phenomenon of religion came into existence were gradually receiving a definite shape as a result of the ever increasing stock of his varied impressions and daily accumulating experiences. The things around him, the regular phenomenon of day and night, the unsupported rotations of the sun and moon, the fury of the wind and the storms, the rain, the growth of plants and trees and the birth and especially the death of men and animals, began to impress

[1] 'All who have made a study of the human body are agreed that we must seek for man's origin in an apelike ancestor.'—Keith, A. B., *The Antiquity of Man.*

him with great force. The stage when men began to consider these things in a systematic and a philosophical manner might be a very advanced one and therefore late in the history of human thought, but the natural curiosity to try to account for, or find the cause of at least some of these phenomena must have occurred quite early. The undeveloped mind might have been satisfied by the vaguest and to us the most unnatural answers, but the existence of the power to raise the question 'Why?' cannot in our opinion be denied even at a time when no definite religious sentiments existed.

The phenomena of nature that raged round him every hour of his life and the precarious existence he had to lead among extremely adverse circumstances made him highly sensitive and superstitious. His evident powerlessness to exercise any control on the occurrences in nature which to the early man were utterly inexplicable, but therefore none the less real, filled him with awe and fear; and the only solution that forced itself upon his simple mind was that there was a conscious agent behind each and all of these phenomena. It should not be imagined that this happened all of a sudden, as if the early man got up one morning, found the things around him inexplicable, was awe-struck and thereupon attributed the agency to some power or powers outside himself. This is all to be taken to have happened very gradually. The incidents which ultimately drove him to this conclusion must have extended over many years, each incident teaching him little by little, in the beginning taken to be the result of mere automatation, the same lesson of his dependence upon things outside himself. Pestilence and sickness carried away those whom he loved, hurricanes brought about ruin, the ravages of weather were unbearable to him, and obtaining food was no easy matter. Then there were the higher natural powers which began to create in him, though by as slow degrees, a sense of reverence by reason of their being inscrutable, awe-inspiring and yet useful.

Once the belief in some powers outside man came into existence, it rapidly began to assume very varied shapes according to the different circumstances in which groups of primitive people found themselves. This is due to the fact that the original conception must have been extremely indistinct and indefinite. Everything that was inexplicable to the early man was attributed to the activity of an agent in the thing (*mana*). In the beginning, these powers were not necessarily believed to be all higher than man. The state of belief being in a fluid condition, the powers were sometimes thought to be higher and uncontrollable and uncoercible, but sometimes greater though coercible. The former led to religion proper, the latter to magic and forms of belief such as fetishism, etc. The indefinite character of the powers believed in also explains the co-existence of magic and the lower forms of belief on the one hand, and religion proper on the other.

Among the Indo-Europeans the religious belief proper began to appear very early, at any rate at a time when the belief in greater but coercible powers only had not taken a permanent hold on the imagination of the men constituting the I.E. peoples. Because once that happened, it appears to be impossible that these people could have conceived of powers which were higher and uncoercible. This explains the existence of purely magical and other similar beliefs among certain lower races of mankind to this day. They do not appear to have risen higher than those at any time in the history of their beliefs. On the other hand it is clear from the Vedas and the *Avesta* that magic came into more and more prominence as time went on.

This view of ours, which was arrived at quite independently, agrees to a certain extent with what is at present held by anthropologists as well as authorities on comparative religion. 'Recent Anthropology', remarks Professor Edwards, 'tends more and more to find the origin of religion —in common with magic—in a pre-animistic period or stage characterized by a sense of awe in the presence of a diffused,

indefinable, mysterious power or powers not regarded as personal. This power is designated by the Melanesian *mana*...and this may be considered the best available term to express it.' The term *mana*, which belongs to the natives of the Pacific region, was first introduced by Codrington. He defines it as follows:

'It is a power or influence not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This *mana* is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything; ... and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, or a stone or a bone.'[1] A little earlier he had described it as 'a force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which it is of the greatest advantage to possess or control'.[2]

Although we hold with Hartland, that 'in man's emotional response to his environment, in his interpretation in the terms of personality of the objects which encountered his attention, and in their investiture by him with potentiality, atmosphere, *orenda*, *mana*—call it by what name you will—we have the common root of magic and religion',[3] we cannot agree to call this potentiality by the name *mana*, as it is defined by Codrington. To definitely assign transmissibility to the power or powers to the consciousness of which both religion and magic owe their origin, and to regard early religions as consisting of an endeavour to possess this power for oneself, as is the case with 'all Melanesian religion', is to give the early vague conception of the existence of power or powers beyond too specialized a character, and thus to deprive the notion of its primitiveness and of its unsettled character. In this sense *mana* probably existed among the Melanesians only. If some attempt to determine the character of these powers amongst other peoples were made,

[1] Codrington, R. H., *The Melanesians*, Oxford, 1891, p. 119 n.
[2] ibid., p. 118 n. [3] *Ritual and Belief*, p. 66.

it does not appear likely that they would all be found to regard them exactly as the Melanesian *mana*.

In the earliest times the mysterious power may have been regarded as transmissible, and getting possession or control of it as most beneficial. But to this must be added *mana* in certain other things, which was non-transferable and which could not be possessed, e.g. the *mana* in the sun, the moon, etc. Thus the qualities of being conveyed and possessed may have been two of the many qualities that were associated with the conception of *mana*, but they were not all. So far as we understand it, this does not include anthropomorphism, which in our opinion was present in some form even in the earliest times. This is admitted by E. O. James who says: 'As a matter of fact animatism, animism, and anthropomorphism constantly exist side by side, and therefore presumably they may be supposed to have arisen simultaneously as an explanation of many different phenomena.'[1] *Mana* in the Melanesian sense certainly 'covers all cases of magico-religious efficacy either automatic or proceeding from a spiritual being'. It also covers the cases of purely magical efficacy, but not those which are more or less purely religious, at any rate more religious than magical. We may thus find the origin of religion in the conception of *mana*, if by that term is understood a mysterious power which can be transferred and possessed, but which is also capable of assuming an anthropomorphic character.

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[1] Op. cit., p. 139.

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# PART II

# INDO-EUROPEAN AND INDO-IRANIAN RELIGION

## CHAPTER III

# MAGIC AND INDO-EUROPEAN RELIGION

It will be well to consider the relation of magic and religion among the I.E.s with the question of the origin of religion. We must point out at the very outset that we are endeavouring to put forward a position which is in fundamental opposition to what is commonly held by scholars of great learning and authority. But being thoroughly convinced of the truth of our position, we venture to put it forward, although we are fully conscious that we are running counter to the opinion of those many worthy writers. We will, illustrating our case and basing our conclusions on the consideration of the I.E. religion and more particularly the Indo-Iranian branch of it, try to prove:

1. that among the I.E.s magic in a developed form did not exist before the birth of religion. It might have existed side by side, but was never until very late powerful enough greatly to influence, affect, or overshadow religion proper.

2. secondly, following the above conclusion logically, we hold that there did not exist among the I.E.s a body of pure spells and charms of the type found in the advanced stages of magic, before prayer, as it is found in the *Ṛigveda*, had come into existence. This should be noted carefully, since we have used the word prayer in this restricted sense almost everywhere in this discussion and not in the usual sense which involves the idea of some sort of communion between the god and his worshipper.

3. thirdly, we hold that neither was there a class of hereditary magicians in existence before the priests.

In short—

(1) that magic among the I.E.s is not older than religion;

(2) that prayer is not derived from charms;

and (3) that the priests were not at first magicians.

The present chapter is in the main devoted only to proving the first proposition, while the other two propositions will be discussed in chapter IV.

As we have already seen, there was, in our opinion, a time when the beliefs of primitive men were in such a fluid and unsettled condition that it can neither be called magic nor religion proper. That there is a certain common ground between magic and religion is undoubted, viz. a common belief in powers beyond.[1] Thus we do not assume with Sir James Frazer, either that magic and religion are like oil and water, the failure of one being the opportunity of the other,[2] or that 'an Age of Religion has been everywhere preceded by an Age of Magic', the abandonment of magic in favour of religion being due to 'a tardy recognition of the inherent falsehood and barrenness of magic', which set the more thoughtful part of mankind to cast about for a truer theory of nature and more fruitful method of turning her resources to account.[3]

We do not dispute the fact that all mankind must have passed through a savage condition of life before they were civilized. But this is not the same thing as saying that that savage condition was identical with the one in which we find the savage races at the present day. It must be fully recognized, as Dr. Marett has pointed out, that 'the savage of today is no older or earlier than the civilized man, so that typological and historical primitiveness cannot be identified off-hand'.[4]

The thought of the existence of these powers beyond occurred to men through a sense of dependence and inscrutability; and the sense of need and an instinctive desire of self-preservation drove them to solicit the help of these powers. So far the origin of both magic and religion is

[1] cf. Hartland, E. S., *Ritual and Belief*, 1914, pp. 26ff.

[2] GB., I, i, pp. 224ff; for a criticism of this view see Marett, *Threshold of Religion*, essay 'From Spell to Prayer'.

[3] GB., I, i, p. 237.

[4] 'Magic', ERE., VIII, p. 247*b*. See Garvie's remarks in *Sociological Papers*, London, 1906, III, p. 265, point (2).

common, *but only so far*. As soon as men began to exploit these powers to serve their selfish motives and to seek assistance from them, there began to come into play quite different and irreconcilable attitudes of mind.[1] It is to these fundamentally different attitudes of mind that the distinctive features of religion and magic are due. Whenever the power was begged or entreated or induced to confer blessings or be of help to men the result was religion, while whenever the performance of certain acts was supposed to bring about a certain event almost automatically, the power solicited having no other option but of doing what the worshipper desired and commanded, the result was magic. That is, when the powers were conceived as coercible it led to magic; when they were conceived as uncoercible and their favour was sought by means of praising, praying or offering gifts to them, it led to religion. But even when these two ways of gaining help from the powers beyond were conceived and practised, neither of them was adhered to strictly and steadfastly; both existed side by side, man using either of the two as occasion required and as he thought would best serve his purpose.

Many authors[2] seem to believe that before any belief in higher and uncoercible powers came into existence the whole of human beliefs and practices were purely magical and that religion was born out of them in all its details.[3] In our opinion there can be no greater mistake than this supposition. It is impossible to imagine for a moment that,

1 'Magic...is not something cruder, more primitive than religion, involving a different working hypothesis, but is rather a set of practices or expedients expressing a different psychical attitude, a different point of view.' —King, I., *The Development of Religion*, New York, 1910, p. 157.

2 e.g. Frazer, GB., I, i, p. 226 n. 2 and p. 233f.

3 See above. A. E. Crawley abandons Frazer's theory and remarks: 'An impartial survey of the Australian evidence results in a *prima facie* case against the theory that religion has its origin in magic. There are, indeed, one or two points which might be taken to indicate the reverse, namely, that magic comes from religion..... There are cases in which the savage resorts to coercion of his god when conciliation has failed.'—*The Tree of Life*, London, 1905, pp. 193-4.

had the mentality of primitive men been taken up completely by magical beliefs and practices (and as soon as magic begins to prevail even slightly, its power, which is altogether irresistible to primitive men, soon becomes predominant), without any shred of what may be called the true element of religion, the sort of nature-religion we find among the I.E. peoples could have been developed out of the same magical antecedents. Because once the magical practices are assumed to have existed in their full form, they could not have failed to overshadow completely the yet undeveloped mind of primitive men, and on such minds, religion in the proper sense could never have dawned except by a miracle. That is exactly what happened in the case of those so-called savage races whose religion was nothing better than a collection of magical beliefs and practices,[1] whatever few and feeble traces of religion we find being probably the remnants of the prehistoric religious beliefs which had then existed side by side with the undeveloped forms of magic. But it is clearly impossible to attempt here a detailed proof of our theory by examining the various religions—although we have no doubt that the theory would bear such an examination—as this is entirely outside the scope of the present dissertation.[2] We shall therefore confine our attention to the I.E. peoples only and more especially to the Indo-Iranians and the Indo-Aryans.[3] We will now briefly trace the relation between magic and religion from the I.E. days to the time of the *Atharvaveda*.

So far as the conception of God in the I.E. period is concerned, we have five philological equations which bear upon it:

(i) Sk. *deva*, Lat. *deus*, Lith. *diẽwas*, Ir. *dia*, O.N. *tivar*,

[1] e.g. the Australian aborigines (GB., I, i, p. 234).

[2] The view that magic did not precede religion, or spells prayer, has been ably put forward by Jevons, F. B., *An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion*, N.Y., 1908, pp. 138–71.

[3] It might however be remarked that no other branch of the I.E. peoples affords any direct proof of the existence of magic before religion and so we need not concern ourselves with them here.

Nom. Pl. Celtic *devos* (in the Gallic proper name *Devognata*), derived from some such root as *div* or *dyu* 'to shine' and meaning 'the shining one', 'god'.[1]

(ii) Sl. *bogŭ*, Old Persian *baga* 'god', Av. *bagha* 'god', Sk. *bhaga* 'god of fortune'.[2]

(iii) Av. *Spenta*, Lith. *szventas*, O.Sl. *svętŭ* 'pure', 'holy', Old Bulg. *svetŏ*.[3]

(iv) Sk. *yaj*, Av. *yaz*, Gk. *ἁγ* in *ἄζομαι* 'to revere',[4] thence 'to worship'.

(v) Sk. *śraddhā*, Lat. *credo*, Celtic *cretim* 'to believe'.[4]

We cannot, however, conclude from these that a fully developed 'faith' in the bright heavenly powers as 'beneficent' and 'holy' gods must have existed in the I.E. period. To do so would be quite unfounded and unreasonable. It is however undeniable that these equations do with great probability, suggest a sure starting-point of the most important religious beliefs of the I.E. peoples. We can also draw certain indirect, but by no means far-fetched inferences from the above equations.

Firstly, that the heavenly phenomena had made a great impression upon, and had attracted the attention of, the I.E.s.

Secondly, that these powers were thought to be beneficent and not inimical.

Thirdly, that the I.E.s regarded these powers with awe and reverence, as a result of which they wished to propitiate and please rather than coerce them into obedience.

Fourthly, that however much they might have been entangled with lower beliefs such as magic, fetishism, ancestor-worship, etc.—if the existence of these in the most primitive condition of all people must be assumed—the I.E.s had at last taken a definite step in rising higher than these. Thus, even though magic, fetishism and other lower beliefs may have existed in the pre-I.E. and I.I. times,

[1] Schrader, p. 302; Bloomfield, RV., p. 108f; Feist, *Kultur*, p. 347.
[2] ibid. [3] Bloomfield, RV., p. 109; Feist, loc. cit.
[4] Bloomfield, RV., p. 109.

they were always of such a feeble form that they could neither prevent the rise, nor impede the progress of the higher nature-religion. In the I.E. period, however, we have only the barest beginnings of this form of religion.

During the age when the Indo-Iranians lived together, the unimportant popular existence of magic and fetishism might have continued; unimportant not because it was popular and thus not very current among the more advanced members of the community, nor because as compared to religion it is an inferior trait of human belief, but because, even among the common people we believe its influence in the Indo-Iranian and the early Ṛigvedic periods to be extremely feeble:[1] on the whole there prevailed nature-worship of a high and poetic kind. The various powers of nature were conceived of as the guardians of the universal law and order, and their favour was sought through poetic praises and gifts. Offerings of food were usual and sacrifices also existed, but their character was not as yet stereotyped. But gradually the sacrifices were becoming more and more complicated and were coming to be offered more regularly. The class of poets who composed the praises or the hymns and who offered the gifts on a 'carpet of herbage'[2] probably already existed, but, though perhaps restricted to certain well-known and influential families, had not become hereditary.

At this time the Indian branch of the Indo-Iranians separated themselves from the Iranians. For a long time the nature of belief and worship continued without much change.

[1] The existence of magic in the Indo-Iranian period is unquestionable from the word *yātu* and the various words formed from it, occurring in both the *Ṛigveda* and the *Avesta*; and this must have continued to exist in the Ṛigvedic times; but from the contents of the *Ṛigveda* it appears improbable that it could then have been very predominant. For these words see Petersberg, and Bartholomæ, AIW.

The prevalent opinion with regard to the Sanskrit word *māyā* which in later Sanskrit comes to mean magic or witchcraft, appears to be that in the beginning it did not mean anything but mysterious power. See Schrader and other Sk. dictionaries.

[2] Herodotus, I, 132.

The Indo-Aryans possessing a genius for language soon developed an admirable phonetic system and a rich vocabulary. The singing of the praises of the 'heavenly ones' was considered to be an important part of the worship of the natural powers [1] and thus the composition of religious poetry was cultivated as a sacred art. And the hymns that were composed, instead of being allowed to be forgotten and newly composed by the succeeding generations, were carefully learnt by heart and handed down in as accurate a form as possible from father to son, by an oral tradition.

Gradually however, the mass of these hymns to be learnt by heart increased so much that it practically killed both the high eagerness to compose new poetry and the original inspiration necessary to compose it. For the same reason the current hymns were much more imperfectly understood. The correct performance of the sacrifice was also receiving more and more attention and this again helped to cause the real meaning and import of the hymns to be forgotten.[2] The *soma* sacrifice was becoming complicated and its importance greatly increased. Separated from the purely poetical praises of the early days the offerings and sacrifices came to be believed in as having magical powers of automatically bringing about the desired end. The function of the hymns was also misunderstood. All attention was paid to the correct repetition of the sacred texts and practically none to what they meant. Thus the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* were cut up into meaningless parts, which hardly differ from a charm in character.

In this way, the original sublime nature-worship became

[1] This is amply borne witness to by the *Sāmaveda* in India, and the *Avesta* of the Iranians. Herodotus (I, 132) reports that 'a Magian man stands by and chants a theogony' while the sacrificial victim is being cut up and spread on 'the carpet of the tenderest herbage'.

[2] Because the genuine character of a prayer and the attention paid to ritualistic formalism are inversely proportional, and where sacrifice becomes all-important, prayer naturally becomes more or less mechanical. This is, in our opinion, the real difference between the religion of the *Ṛigveda* and that of the other Vedas.

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more or less a collection of magical rites,[1] although the gods were still heavenly powers. This conception then underwent a further degeneration. Just as the sacrifices had power over gods, so there came into being rites, the performance of which brought about the desired effect through the instrumentality of other deities. The various diseases were believed to be due to the activity of certain spirits, and the desire to protect men from them gave rise to charms and incantations which have their beginning in the latest portions of the *Ṛigveda* and become fully developed in the *Atharvaveda*.

The above description is fully borne out by the evidence of the Vedic literature, especially the later Saṁhitās and the oldest Brāhmaṇas. And, in our opinion, the Iranian religion which existed during a thousand years before the birth of Zoroaster, the prophet, followed more or less the same lines of development, and had probably reached a much worse condition.[2] Without this assumption it is impossible to ex-

[1] cf. Macdonell, 'Magic (Vedic),' ERE., VIII, p. 311*b*.

[2] It may probably be argued that the idea of the Iranian religion we obtain from Herodotus (I, 131-2) is quite different: it shows us no signs of corruption but rather a form of religion which was of a higher and a purer kind than that of the Greeks themselves. We must however recognize that the statement of Herodotus, although we do not deny its truthfulness, is as general as can be, and made about the religion of a different nation. In two short sentences (devoting however a paragraph to the description of a sacrifice) Herodotus has described the whole of the Iranian religion. Such being the case of the evidence on which a contrary conclusion is to be based, it would be extremely misleading to make it the starting point of the Iranian religion of the time of Herodotus. Moreover, from what was going on among the Vedic Indians at that time, we learn that the stage of simplicity in beliefs and practices had long been passed, and there was rapidly growing a craze for complexity of which we find monumental records in the Yajurveda, the Brāhmaṇas and the early Sūtras. Neither can the Iranians of the time be regarded as an exception, because practically the same manner of thinking is, although much less evidently, found in their own literature.

The corruption again, although it was of such a character as to deserve the condemnation of Zoroaster and powerful enough to overshadow the whole of the nature-religion, had by no means displaced the heavenly powers from their position as gods, nor were sacrifices discontinued. Thus Herodotus is certainly right when he says that the Persians worshipped the sky and other powers and offered sacrifices to them. It was the character, the significance

plain the causes of the great religious revolution[1] initiated by Zoroaster. So it is probable that when Zoroaster was born the old religion of the worship of nature-powers was hopelessly corrupt and magical practices abounded to such an extent that a man of Zoroaster's inspiration could not refrain from expressing his disgust of it. Had the Iranian religion been of even tolerably uncorrupted form, there could not have been such a strong reaction, which is an undoubted fact,[2] since we have more than one instance in which an

and the meaning of the sacrifice and the immense outgrowth of magic and witchcraft by the side of it that Herodotus, having no very intimate knowledge of the common people of Iran, let go unrecorded.

Probably Herodotus did not know that although the gods of heaven were prayed to and worshipped, 'they were employed mechanically' (Bloomfield, AV., p. 3), and had become 'sterile' (ibid.) as the Vedic gods in the period of the *Atharvaveda* and the Brāhmaṇas.

As to the inaccuracies of Herodotus see the notes in A. J. Grant's ed. of Rawlinson's tr. of *Herodotus*, 2 vols., London, 1897. See, e.g., notes on I, pp. 78–82.

[1] Edward Meyer in his article 'Persia' (History: Ancient, in EB., p. 204[b]) attributes this change to violent religious disputes and feuds which he thinks probably broke out in the remote past. But this appears to be merely a conjecture, which assumes the existence of as contrasted a view of life, both intellectual and religious, as that which is presented by the fully developed Indian and Iranian religions. Although it might be admitted that there may have been some marked differences between the two sections of the Indo-Iranians this could never have amounted to express hostility simply because the points of difference, if there were any at all, were in extremely undeveloped form. There was neither a sacerdotal Brahmanism, nor a formulated ethical Zoroastrianism to come into conflict with each other, during the Indo-Iranian period. The conflict between the *daeva*-party and the ahura-party belongs to a period at most a century or two previous to the birth of the prophet, a time many centuries after the separation of the two peoples, during which the lines of development of religion in Iran were not much different from those of the Vedic religion.

'Hitherto, two explanations have been offered for accounting for the origin of Zoroastrianism. The first of these assumes a sort of religious revolution which brought about once for all the separation of the Iranians from the Hindus.... The second theory....traces in the Magdaen system a development of a natural type, an evolution of Indo-Iranian mythology.'—C. de Harlez, *Introduction to the Avesta*, Eng. tr., Bombay, 1921, p. 320. According to Harlez 'the truth lies between these two extremes, the *Avesta* is the product of a number of influences'.

[2] In the Gāthas, *daeva*-worship 'is fiercely denounced as the worst

older deity has not only ceased to be worshipped, but is actually turned into an evil power, a demon.* The reaction may however be partly due to foreign influence, e.g. of the Babylonians and the Semites.

Our theory thus, first, asserts the uniformity of development among the two branches of the Indo-Iranian peoples.

Secondly, it explains, in our opinion, better than any other theory the prevalence of magic in the *Atharvaveda*.[1]

Thirdly, it explains the very cause of the rise of the great religious reformer Zoroaster, and the change of the older gods into demons.

Fourthly, the theory asserts that at least during the Indo-Iranian period and times immediately preceding that period, these peoples were singularly free from many and complicated magical practices, and the mention and evidence of them that we find in their religious literature is due not to their immemorial antiquity and existence in all periods, but rather to the degeneration of the purer faith, which was itself due probably to the contact with the uncivilized tribes and to the degeneration in the character of these people that had actually set in and was gradually spreading. The Vedic Indians at any rate began unmistakably to degenerate after the period of the composition of the Ṛigvedic hymns. We will treat this question more fully when we come to the Vedic religion.

Along with the prevalence of magic in the *Atharvaveda* our theory explains the absence of magical charms in the older part of the *Ṛigveda*.[2] Even if the compilation of the

hindrance to the Prophet's work' and the following curse is pronounced upon the *daeva*-worshippers:

'But these that are of an evil dominion of evil deeds, evil words, evil self and evil thought, followers of the Lie, the Souls go to receive them with foul food; in the House of the Lie shall they be meet inhabitants.' —Moulton, J. H., *Early Religious Poetry of Persia*, Cambridge, 1911, p. 110.

1 This argument will be enlarged below.

2 'Only a dozen of its (the *Ṛigveda*'s) 1,028 hymns are concerned with magic, about one-half of them being auspicious, the rest maleficent in character.' —Macdonell, art. 'Magic (Vedic),' ERE., VIII, p. 311[b]. 'It is indeed certain....that the hymns of a magical character found in the *Ṛigveda* are very few and late.'—ibid., p. 312[a].

*Rigveda* was the work of highly cunning and clever hereditary priests who later became the Brahmins, and a composition which has reference only to the beliefs and practices of the higher strata of society, it does not seem likely that they could, purposely and deliberately, have kept such a popular, and therefore powerful, belief altogether away.

The contention that the *Atharvaveda* represents a popular form of beliefs and practices which go back to a period previous to that of the *Rigveda* appears to have been based on no other ground but that of the similarity between the magical and other practices described in the *Atharvaveda* and those found among the savage races. From an examination of the beliefs and practices of these savage races, anthropologists concluded that in the most primitive stages of human evolution, the human mind, without distinction of any race or country whatever, was more or less entirely dominated by magic. It is observed that the most backward savage tribes, although they have beliefs which may be said to verge on the religious, are on the whole believers in magic. By some unfortunate circumstances they were unable to get beyond this stage of the childhood of the human race and their progress having stagnated, they have remained in the same state to the present day.

In the light of this generally accepted deduction, it was not surprising that the Vedic literature should be interpreted as affording yet another proof of the same conclusion; a proof which was all the more attractive and convincing because, firstly, it was based on the written records of a very old period, and secondly, it was quite independent, since it belonged to a different but a civilized race.

A detailed study of the Vedic ritual revealed to Oldenberg that it was greatly overgrown with magical practices, some of which were not only similar to those found among the savages of today, but almost identical with them. As a result Oldenberg explained this intermixture of the religious and the magical in the Vedic ritual and literature as being in perfect harmony with anthropological facts and

conclusions. The anthropologists in their turn, welcomed this view as an authoritative evidence afforded by a people who were dominated by religion in a very marked degree. What Oldenberg held about the religion in the Vedic literature was used not only by anthropologists like Frazer, but even philologists like Schrader derived from it great support for their position.

The consequence of all this has been that almost every writer on the subject tacitly assumes that magical spell was preceded by prayer and that the magician was the precursor of the priest. In regard to the Vedic literature and religion again, it is held that, although the *Atharvaveda* is a composition of a later date, its contents are older even than those of the *Ṛigveda*. These views have gained so much currency that it is almost scientifically sacrilegious to question their truth; yet it is hoped that a keen desire to know and ascertain the truth may be pardoned even this offence.

The whole position appears to be, in the words of Dr. Farnell, a grave 'anthropological fallacy'. On the ground of the general inductive belief that the higher races have at one time passed through a savage phase, it was rashly assumed that each and all of them must at one time have possessed a particular institution. 'This', Dr. Farnell remarks, 'is to exaggerate the principle of solidarity, to ignore the fact of the great diversity actually observable among existing primitive societies, and the possibility that it was just by avoiding some particular detrimental institution that some of the higher peoples were able to proceed on their path of progress.'[1]

The following passage from Professor Hopkins' *Religions of India*,[2] illustrates the fallacious nature of the supposed anthropological parallels.

'From an Aryan point of view how much weight is to be placed on comparisons of the formulæ in the Atharvan of

[1] *Evolution of Religion*, 1905, pp. 12–14; see also Marett, art. 'Magic' (Intr.) ERE., VIII, pp. 247a-48b.

[2] p. 159.

India with those of other Aryan nations? Kuhn[1] has compared an old German magic formula of healing with one in the Atharvan (IV. 12) and because each says 'limb to limb' he thinks that they are of the same origin, particularly since the formula is found in Russian.' 'The comparison', Professor Hopkins remarks, 'is interesting, but is far from convincing. Such formulæ spring up independently all over the earth.'

The position of Oldenberg[2] is briefly as follows: Magic is found in the most civilized as in the savage communities and the Indian tradition does not constitute an exception to this universal type.[3] Long before the supreme gods, the guardians of justice and morality were conceived, man banished the maleficent spirits by fire and water, destroyed the enemy by destroying his effigy or his hair, and brought about the rain through the construction of an image of rain. From the lowest stages the cult of the sacrifice and adoration were most closely and intimately connected with the operations of magic; the priest was at the same time the magician; more magician than priest. But progress of time fatally separated the two domains. The one favoured the mental development of the race and above all the moral ideas which transform the essence of religion; the other, immobile and stagnant, was content to remain in primitive savagery. Then he asks whether this separation of magic and religion was effected during the Vedic times and answers that the complicated ceremonies of marriage, initiation, the Rājasūya, etc., which are interspersed with magical practices, bear authentic marks of the greatest antiquity.

To what has already been said it may be added that Oldenberg fails to make a clear distinction between the period of the *Ṛigveda* and the later Saṁhitās and the

[1] *Indische und germanische Segenssprüche*, KZ., XIII, p. 49.

[2] RV., pp. 476ff.

[3] This argument can hardly be taken seriously, for the simple reason that universal existence of a thing or phenomenon is no proof of its primitive, much less of its most primitive character.

Brāhmaṇas. If this distinction is not made and the whole of the Vedic literature is considered as a whole, it is possible to speak of the Vedic ritual as one overgrown with magical practices which corresponds with those found among the savage tribes. But otherwise—which is indeed the right course—it is impossible to follow the view of Oldenberg. The importance of this distinction is now clearly recognized. '.... as regards the *Ṛigveda* proper,' writes Professor Keith,[1] 'Hopkins[2] has justly insisted upon the historical distinction between the Brāhmanic age and belief as those are known in extant literature, and the age and belief of the *Ṛigveda*. The extant Brāhmaṇas and even the *Atharvaveda* represent a period so removed from that of the *Ṛigveda*, that the god who in the *Ṛigveda* is not yet developed as chief god is in the Brāhmaṇas and Atharvan already an antiquated figure-head with whom other newer ritualistic gods are identified to ensure their respectability.'

Moreover, the Vedic literature clearly shows not so much the separation of magic and religion as their coming closer and closer together till at last the one can hardly be distinguished from the other. The magical character of both the prayers and the sacrifice, since the later part of the Ṛigvedic period, does not diminish but manifests clear signs of being on the increase. If there is no prejudice in favour of a preconceived opinion, this should be obvious to anyone acquainted with the Vedic literature. Macdonell,[3] who shares the view of Oldenberg, himself states the position quite clearly. He says:

'In the creative age of the *Ṛigveda* new prayers were produced for ritual purposes; but in the later Vedas.... prayer was nothing more than the mechanical application of ready-made formulas', and then adds, that the idea of the efficacy of prayer, even in the *Ṛigveda*, shows that '*magic is already beginning to encroach on the domain of religion.* A

[1] TS., I, p. clix.

[2] PAOS. (1894), p. cxxii; JAOS., XV, 163f; XVI, p. 3f.

[3] 'Vedic Religion,' ERE., XII, pp. 610b-611.

similar tendency is observable in regard to the sacrifice which accompanied the prayers to the gods. The conception of the effect of sacrifice which prevails in the *Ṛigveda* is that the offering wins the favour of a god and induces him to fulfil the accompanying prayer..... Even in the *Ṛigveda*, however, traces are already to be found of the notion that the sacrifice exercises compulsion not only over gods, but also over natural phenomena without requiring the co-operation of the gods. Here again we have the intrusion of magic into the domain of religion. In the ritual of the Brāhmaṇas we find that the latter has already been largely supplanted by the former.'

The gradual growth of magic and its increasing predominance in the Vedic ritual is also attested by the fact that the *Yajurveda* occupies an intermediate position between the *Ṛigveda* on the one hand and the *Atharvaveda* and the Brāhmaṇas on the other. We have here the authority of Professor Keith [1]—if indeed any were necessary. 'The relation of the text of the *Atharvaveda* to that of the *Taittiriya Samhita* is also of importance in the question of chronology. Bloomfield [2] has subjected the texts to a close examination, and has pronounced definitely for the priority of the *Yajurveda*.... More important than any mere detailed comparisons of verses is the regular working over of Yajus material for magical purposes: the Yajus used sorcery in connexion with its great rites, but the *Atharvaveda* converts these incidents into substantial and independent objects.'

In our opinion the astounding similarity between the magical practices found among the savage races and in the Vedic literature is due to an *identical attitude of mind* which gives rise to them and not necessarily to their immemorial antiquity. Thus what we find in the *Atharvaveda* is the product of the same universal attitude of mind, which, whenever and wherever it occurs gives rise to similar practices and follows the same lines of development. So it

[1] TS., I, pp. clxi–xii. [2] AV., pp. 50–56.

does not appear necessary to assume that the contents of the *Atharvaveda* existed among the masses from the I.E. period and even times preceding that period.

Linguistically again, no part of the *Atharvaveda* can, by any process of argument whatever, be shown to be pre-Ṛigvedic. If there are some portions which clearly appear to be contemporaneous with the *Ṛigveda*, it simply means that these particular beliefs of a lower nature existed at that time and not necessarily previous to it. We do not deny that some magical practices may have existed at the time of the *Ṛigveda* as in all periods of the history of I.E. belief, but what we cannot believe is that, even in the period of the *Ṛigveda*, magic and witchcraft prevailed among the masses to more or less the same extent as found in the *Atharvaveda*, and that the *Ṛigveda* was kept free from any trace of their existence by the care and cunning of the collectors of the hymns of the *Ṛigveda*. This would lead us to a somewhat self-contradictory position. We will have first to assert that the magical practices exercised a great deal of influence among the masses and yet the influence was not strong enough to bring the whole of the Vedic population under its sway. If the existence of magical practices is proved and not simply inferred, it is impossible to imagine that there can be at that early age any section of the population, however intelligent, cunning and advanced, which could remain absolutely uninfluenced by and positively unfavourable towards such practices and so discrete as to leave no trace of its existence whatsoever, even in that most heterogeneous of collections called the *Ṛigveda*. So far as the magical contents of the *Ṛigveda* are concerned we believe that the express charms found in it are later additions composed contemporaneously with the hymns of the other Saṁhitās, while the rites and ceremonies contained in it are tending to be magical but are not fully so, as is assumed by Oldenberg and accepted by Schrader, Frazer and others on his authority. In this respect the latest additions to the *Ṛigveda* belong properly to a period

of transition. What Keith says in this respect is perfectly true and decisive:

'....it is impossible to regard the *Atharvaveda* as a direct complement of the *Ṛigveda* and as giving the popular side of the Ṛigvedic religion. The *Atharvaveda* was probably not reduced to its present form much, if at all, earlier than 500 B.C., and the popular worship included in it is one which is at once separated by a considerable period in time from that of the *Ṛigveda* and is presented to us, not in its primitive form, but as it was taken up by the priests.'[1]

Again, if the priests took care that no trace of any popular belief was left in the *Ṛigveda*, how were the same priests disposed to preserve an entire collection of such lower beliefs as is found in the *Atharvaveda* in an age when they were growing more exclusive, more conscious of their own power and indispensability, more careful in maintaining their prestige and keeping the rest of the people in complete darkness about the sacred learning? It is inconceivable that there were other people among the general masses who were learned enough to compose and collect the hymns as they are found in the *Atharvaveda*. It is impossible to believe that the *Atharvaveda* was composed and collected by any other sections of the Vedic Indians but those who composed and collected the hymns of the other Vedas.[2] Neither can it be believed that the same priests, while deliberately excluding all magical practices from the *Ṛigveda*, readily consented, nay, actually took such great pains as to collect and preserve the whole of this magical literature so carefully. The fact rather appears to be that at the time of the *Ṛigveda* magic and witchcraft existed in a very meagre form. During the period of the *Sāmaveda*

[1] IM., p. 12.

[2] 'The AV. contains a mass of popular religion which has been taken up and worked over by the same priestly classes to whose activity other texts are due.'—Keith, IM., p. 11.

After this authoritative statement of Professor Keith, any independent proof of the position would be superfluous, a proof which it is not at all difficult to furnish.

and the *Yajurveda*, due firstly to the increased contact and association with the aborigines of India,[1] secondly, to the magical character which both prayer and sacrifice were gradually assuming, and thirdly to the mental degeneration which had set in probably owing to climatic conditions and the growing population among which it became increasingly difficult to keep the original faith extant in its purer form, it began to develop so rapidly, and at the same time so unconsciously, that the very priestly class which was even then the sole guardian of the literary heritage and intellectual beliefs had itself fallen a prey. Instead of equivocally declaring magic and superstition as belonging to the demoniac world, it was formed into a collection, which 'poses outwardly in the same attitude of dignity as the *Rigveda*',[2] 'the Brahmanical priests handling charm and hocus-pocus as religion not as superstition'.[3] The whole population of the Vedic Indians without exception of any single class of individuals came to believe in, and sanction and sanctify the practice of magic. Magic and witchcraft formed an essential part of religion; they had 'penetrated and become intimately blended with the holiest Vedic rites'.[4] In the form of giving undue importance to sacrifice, the mental degeneration of the Vedic Indians had already begun and gone a fair way even during that comparatively bright period of the *Rigveda*. To this was soon to be added magic and witchcraft and, lastly, the priest-craft.

One more reason for holding that the Indo-Europeans were free from an all-engrossing form of magic is their adventurous character and continual migrations from one country to another. Ever moving from one place to another, conquering new peoples and new lands; after conquest subduing them and spreading both their language and civilization would require a healthy and a vigorous view of life, full of energy, daring and fearlessness. This condition

[1] cf. Bloomfield, AV., p. 2.
[2] Bloomfield, AV., p. 3. [3] ibid.
[4] Bloomfield, SBE., XLII, p. xlv.

is certainly not only not conducive to the growth of magic and superstition, but hardly to their survival on any extensive scale, assuming they existed in former times. Magic, generally speaking, is the curse of a settled, undisturbed and isolated life, and it has all the more disastrous effects if the people happen to live in a bad climate. It is here that a human being living a precarious life imagines all manner of ghosts, goblins and spirits, some of which are good but many bad. It is under these circumstances that fear greatly predominates. Every unfortunate and harmful event is ascribed to the activity of an evil spirit and only occasionally to the displeasure of the gods—if there are any.

About the oldest I.E.s we do not pretend to speak with any certainty. They may have had magic, they may not; although the latter view appears to us to be more probable. But regarding the Indo-Iranians we feel confident to say that the very mode of their migratory and ever-shifting life would prevent them from being very superstitious or magical. 'Tribes of limited local range and a meagre past without traditions may conceive the world around them on a feeble scale. But migration helps to enlarge the outlook. Local powers cannot accompany tribes upon the march. Either they must be left behind and drop out of remembrance, or they must be identified with new scenes and adapted to fresh environments. When the horizon moves ever further forwards with each advance, earth and sky loom vaster before the imagination, and sun and moon, the companion of each day or the protector of each night, gain more stately predominance.'[1]

If we are at all right in saying that the Vedic Indians had lived with the early Persians in the Iranian highlands and thence descended into India, it is not difficult to imagine how hardy and enterprising these people must have been. We certainly do not know the reason why they so migrated; but whatever its nature may have been, whether it was due

[1] Carpenter, J. E., *Comparative Religion*, London, 1913 (?), pp. 105-6.

to a religious quarrel or religious persecution, or whether to forcible expulsion or want of sustenance that they actually traversed dreary Afghanistan and crossed the dreadful passes in the Hindukush, it was an extraordinary achievement in itself. Nor was this all. They not only found India, but conquered and subdued the original inhabitants, and succeeded in imposing and maintaining the religion and civilization they had brought with them.

Among such people, it appears to us, there may have existed some superstitious beliefs as well as some queer practices such as the burning of the widow or even human sacrifice, but they certainly could not have had much of magic. If it is impossible to prove positively that there was not much magic in the I.E. period and if its existence in a somewhat advanced stage must be admitted merely on the force of analogy afforded by the evidence of beliefs and practices among the savage races of today, the surviving practices during the Ṛigvedic period at any rate could not have been many and complicated.

What is here suggested would again reflect very favourably upon the origin of religion among the Indo-European peoples. Even if we cannot say anything for certain, the assumed lack of purely magical practices among the Indo-Iranians and the early Indo-Aryans in our opinion affords a good explanation of many difficult points in the development of the I.E., I.I. as well as Indo-Aryan religions. It would also embolden us to say that from the very beginning the higher natural phenomena had made a greater impression on the I.E. peoples and that their religious conceptions need not be assumed to have passed through all the stages of the full-fledged systems of Fetishism, Magic, Spiritism, etc., as the religions of the other people appear to have done.

Herbert Spencer,[1] while putting forward the theory of ancestor-worship as the origin of religion, had remarked that

[1] *The Principles of Sociology*, London, 1876, I, pp. 313ff.

the adherents of the evolution-doctrine cannot claim 'a profound distinction between different human races'. Although this statement is quite correct, Spencer makes use of fallacious arguments to prove his position. Firstly, the statement 'no Indo-European or Semitic nation, so far as we know, seems to have made a religion of worship of the dead' cannot be regarded as equivalent to holding that the Indo-Europeans and the Semites were 'supernaturally endowed with higher conceptions' (as Spencer takes it); and secondly, denying the validity of the theory of ancestor-worship as the origin of all gods is in no way inconsistent with the theory of evolution. For the evolution theory by no means proves, nor even seeks to prove, that the manner of development, whether mental or physical, is always the same in every detail, whatever the influences at work may have been. Had this been the case, all races of mankind ought to have advanced according to a fixed scale of progress and ought to have reached exactly the same stage of civilization and culture at any particular time. Even according to the principle of evolution, which is in consonance with facts, there is room enough for exceptionally rapid progress or for a stationary condition, as well as a rapid retrogression. Wherever it is accountable by reasons and supported by facts, the theory of evolution does not and cannot deny its validity. It is true, in the case of the mental development of the I.E. peoples, that all the causes are not accurately ascertainable, but the cumulative effect of the known facts undoubtedly suggests that they had developed the conception of religion very early, not because they were a gifted race but through perfectly natural although unfortunately unascertainable causes.

Thus, not believing in the existence of a particular primitive institution or in a particular mode of the development of religion among a particular race or people does not necessarily mean that the writer does not believe in the validity of the theory of evolution; nor is there, as has been shown above, any inconsistency in doing this. One can

believe in the evolution-doctrine and at the same time question the truth of the views that gods were developed out of ghosts or religion out of magic.

We might conclude this discussion with what Dr. Farnell[1] has said about the relation of magic with religion in Greece and which in our opinion expresses the truth in the least objectionable, because in the most moderate terms:

'It is reasonable to believe that magic was in vogue in prehistoric Hellas, not necessarily in antagonism to religion, but practised for purposes of the community as well as for private ends. The few records that may avail for an opinion concerning the prehistoric period fail to suggest any such prevalence of magic as might obstruct intellectual progress or growth of a higher religion. They reveal generally a type that is harmless or even philanthropic. Doubtless some black magic *also may have* existed but at no time was the religion or the intellect of Greece so *entirely* clouded with magic, as was the case elsewhere in the ancient civilizations, notably in Egypt and Mesopotamia.'[2]

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[1] Farnell, L. R., *Outline History of Greek Religion*, new ed., London, 1921.
[2] op. cit., pp. 48-50. The italics are ours.

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## CHAPTER IV

# THE INDO-EUROPEANS: THEIR HOME AND CULTURE

### 1. *The terms Indo-European and Indo-Iranian*

ON philological and other grounds it is commonly assumed that the Indians, the Iranians and the Armenians of Asia, and the Slavs, the Lithuanians, Greeks, the Romans, the Celts and the Germans[1] of Europe, were, at some distant age—about 3,000 to 2,500 years before Christ[2]—originally one people, or a common group of associated people, living a common life and speaking a common language or more probably different dialects of essentially the same language.[3] There are four terms by which this original people, or its various branches when collectively spoken of, are designated. This plurality of names is due to the fact that the racial consciousness of the original group being yet undeveloped, it did not possess a common name.[4] These terms are Indo-Celtic, Indo-Germanic, Indo-European and Aryan. The first of these terms is the least popular among scholars as well as other writers;

[1] G. Sergi, *The Mediterranean Race*, London, 1901. Professor Sergi thinks it is an error to maintain that the Germans and the Scandinavians are Aryans; they are what he calls 'Eurafricans of the Nordic variety', and further—

(1) that the Aryans are of Asiatic origin; and

(2) that the two classic civilizations, Greek and Latin, were not Aryan, but Mediterranean. According to him the Aryans were savages when they invaded Europe: they destroyed in part the superior civilization of the Neolithic population, and could not have created the Greco-Latin civilization.

See pp. 1–27. Professor Keith expresses a similar opinion, BCV., p. 91 (see below).

[2] 'The period of I.E. unity need not be placed earlier than 3000 B.C.'—Keith, BCV., p. 92; cf. Meyer, GA., I, ii. p. 857f.

[3] cf. Schrader, p. 879.

[4] Meyer, op. cit., p. 851. It is possible that the word *arya* in some form was I.E. and meant a 'friend' or 'a noble person', but it could not have

it was however used by F. Spiegel.[1] The German scholars use the term Indo-Germanic;[2] the term Indo-European is generally found in the writings of French, English and Italian philologists; while the term Aryan was employed by Max Müller and other popular writers in English and was recently used by Schröder in his *Arische Religion.*

The first two terms arose from the views which regarded the Celtic and the Germanic languages as the westernmost members of the I.E. family of languages, and the Indian languages as the easternmost branch. But the discovery of the Tocharian language has deprived these terms of the principal reason on which they were based.[3] And since the term Aryan is more properly reserved for the Indo-Iranians only,[4] we will use, as we have already done so far, the term Indo-European. Even this term might be objected to on two grounds: first, because, strictly construed, it will leave out the Iranians, the Armenians and the Tocharians;[5] and secondly, because one part of the term denotes a country or people inhabiting one country, while the other denotes a continent or people inhabiting a continent. But since all terms are objectionable, and since some term must be used, some objections must be disregarded, and the writers in English seem to have chosen well in disregarding the objections to the term Indo-European. It is indeed being more commonly used,[6] and the meaning of the term is already

been used as a common name for the I.E. people as a whole. Sk. *arya, ārya* O. Pers. *ariya,* Av. *airya,* probably surviving in the proper names, Pers. *Ariobarzanes,* Teut. *Ariovistus,* and in the names of peoples and countries, Vedic Āryas, Iran, Irani, Iranian; (doubtful) Airem, Erin, Ireland. See Kaegi, RV., p. 109; Hopkins, RI., p. 25, n. 1; Schrader[2], I., p. 54[b]; Carnoy, IE., p. 48.

[1] *Die Arische Periode.*

[2] A. Kuhn, E. H. Meyer, S. Feist, E. Meyer, H. Hirt, O. Schrader, etc. In his article in the ERE. however Schrader uses the term Aryan, evidently as an English equivalent of the term Indo-Germanic.

[3] Schrader, 2nd ed., s.v. *Indogermanen.*

[4] ibid., s.v. *Arier.*

[5] See Giles, P., *A short Manual of Comparative Philology,* 2nd ed., London, 1901, pp. 7-8.

[6] It is used by Bloomfield and Macdonell. Hopkins, however, employs

free from ambiguity. To keep up the similarity and symmetry we will use the term Indo-Iranian instead of the shorter term Aryan.[1]

## 2. *The Home of the Indo-Europeans*

There can be but few controversial questions in the world which have given rise to such a volume of discussion as the question of the original home of the Indo-Europeans, and in spite of all this discussion, the answer appears to have remained as uncertain as ever. Not only the definite region, but even the continent from where they began to migrate into other parts of the world, is undetermined. Thus, different portions of the continents of Asia and Europe have been, at different times, put forward as the probable home of the Indo-Europeans. Traditionally, however, it was always supposed to lie in Asia and even the scientific investigators till the middle of the nineteenth century were unanimously in favour of this view. Schlegel,[2] found it in India; Mommsen[3] in Mesopotamia; A. Pictet[4] and August Schleicher[5] in old Bactria between the Hindukush and the river Oxus (*Amu Darja*) and the Belur-dagh; H. Brunnhofer[6] in Armenia; August Fick[7] first found it in the wide steppes of Turan but later in the north of the Caucasus;[8] and F. Justi,[9] Monier-Williams,[10] F. Lenormant[11] on the Plateau of Pamir. Johannes Schmidt, who

the term Aryan in preference to Indo-European, 'because it is short'.—RI., p. 25, n. 1.

1 cf. Feist, *Kultur*, p. 1; see also Poussin, IEII., p. 2, n. 1.

2 *Sprache und Weisheit der Inder*, 1808.

3 *Römische Geschichte*, XVII, p. 16.

4 *Les Origines indo-européennes*, Paris, 1859.

5 *Geschichte der deutschen Sprache*, p. 83f.

6 *Uber die Ursitze der Indogermanen*, Basel, 1884.

7 *Beiträge zur Kunde der indogermanischen Sprachen*, XXIX, pp. 225ff.

8 *Z. für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, XLI, pp. 336ff.

9 *Aufsatz über die Urzeit der Indogermanen*, pp. 24ff.

10 *Nineteenth Century*, 1881.

11 *Les Origines de l'histoire d'après la Bible et les traditions des peuples orientaux*, II, p. 40.

has put forward important arguments for the Asiatic origin, came to the same conclusion as F. Justi and others (viz. the highland of Pamir). His principal argument is based on the Indo-European system of enumeration.[1] Otto Bremer[2] argues that the Aral-Caspian steppe was the original Indo-European home.

Among others, Max Müller[3] and J. Muir,[4] supported the Asiatic origin of the Indo-Europeans. More recently (1917) Professor Keith[5] has supported the view that 'the I.E. home lay in the plateau of central Asia'. Keith adduces evidence which in his opinion 'indicates that the entry of Aryans into Iran took place from the north-east', holding it improbable that the Indo-Iranians had in the first place come from Europe. He admits the possibility of utilizing the discovery of the Tocharian language for the European (as is done by Bender for example) as well as the Asiatic origin of the I.E.s but thinks that *a priori* their movement from east to west is more probable than one in the opposite direction.[6] Sigmund Feist[7] also, deriving strong support from the evidence of the Tocharian language, thinks the I.E. home lay in central Asia and more especially in Russian Turkestan. A. C. Das[8] in his recent book supports the discredited view of finding it in the Punjab.

R. G. Lathan, first, in the introduction to an edition of the *Germania* of Tacitus in 1851, and in 1862 in his *Elements of Comparative Philology*,[9] and Theodor Benfey, in his introduction to Fick's *Vergl. Wörterbuch*, were the first to oppose the traditional view, and to seek it in Europe. Since the beginning of the present century, the European

1 'Die Urheimat der Indogermanen und der europäische Zählensystem', *Abhandlungen der Berliner Akademie der Wissenchaften*, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 1890.

2 'Ethnographie der germanischen Stämme', *Grundriss der germ. Philologie*, III, p. 757.

3 *Essays*, II, pp. 41ff. 4 Muir, II.

5 BCV., p. 91. 6 ibid., pp. 90-91.

7 *Kultur*, pp. 518ff; see also Meyer, GA., I, ii, pp. 876-95, especially pp. 889-95.

8 *Rigvedic India*, Calcutta, 1921, I, pp. xiv-xv. 9 pp. 611ff.

origin of the Indo-Europeans has been becoming more and more probable, and this is almost entirely due to the work of German scholars. But even here the unanimity is with regard to the continent only. Thus, O. Schrader[1] thinks it lies in the region of the steppes in south Russia;[2] Tomaschek[3] in the region of the Danube; L. Geiger[4] in Germany itself; H. Hirt[5] in the south-eastern Baltic region; K. Penka[6] and M. Much[7] in the south-western Baltic region, i.e. south Sweden, Denmark or northern Germany; L. von Schröder[8] in south-eastern Europe, while Bender[9] finds it 'in the great plain of central southern Europe, which embraces roughly, the present Poland, Lithuania, Ukraine and Russia south and west of the Volga.'[10] The

[1] *Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*, II, pp. 506 and 514; *Reallexikon*, 1901, pp. 878 and 901; and less definitely in *Die Indogermanen*, 1911, p. 160.

[2] For objections raised against this conclusion see H. Hirt, *Die Indogermanen*, 1907, p. 619; Schröder, AR., I, pp. 221ff.; Feist, *Kultur*, pp. 503-4. See also the detailed criticism of Schrader's view in Karl Penka, *O. Schraders Hypothese von den Sudrussischen Urheimat der Indogermanen*, Leipzig, 1908 (?).

The most important objection put forward by Keith is that 'south Russia is essentially a place of passage and not a permanent abode'.—BCV., p. 91.

[3] *I. Sitzungsberichte der Wiener Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Phil.-hist. Klasse, CXVI, p. 716f.

[4] *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschheit*, 1871, pp. 113ff.

The most important objections to this theory are that (i) the I.E.s did not know the sea (cf. Bender, loc. cit.); and (ii) the striking fact that the I.E. speech has suffered such striking alterations at the hands of the Germans, is most easily explained by the hypothesis that in Germany this speech was imposed by a small minority on a pre-existing population.—Keith, BCV., p. 91. See also Sergi, G., *Mediterranean Race*, London, 1901, p. vi.

[5] *Die Indogermanen*, 1905, I, pp. 176–98. [6] *Herkunft der Arier.*

[7] *Die Heimat der Indogermanen im Lichte der urgeschichtlichen Forschung*, Berlin, 1902.

[8] *Die Arische Religion*, Leipzig, 1914, p. 228.

[9] *The Home of the Indo-Europeans*, Princeton and London, 1922.

[10] A. J. Carnoy in his *Les Indo-Européens*, p. 76 says, '*C'est donc dans le sud des vastes plaines de Russie* (more definitely '*région du Dnieper*') *que semble avoir été le plus ancien centre de dispersion des Indo-Européens auquel nous puissons remonter*'. Moulton, on the other hand, had simply declared it to be 'somewhere in Europe'. 'The actual home of the original "Indo-Germanic" or "Indo-European" tribes we cannot determine with

latest theory for a European home is that of Professor Giles in the *Cambridge History of India.*[1] According to him Austria-Hungary was the original area of characterization of the I.E. tribes.

The arguments for a European home of the Indo-Europeans, irrespective of a particular region, may be summarized as follows:[2]

(1) Firstly, from the philological fact that 'almost every Indo-European language shares with its cognate a common word for honey, or an intoxicating drink made from honey',[3] it is inferred that the Indo-Europeans must have originally lived in a 'honey-land'. But while none of the Asiatic sites proposed as the possible home of the Indo-Europeans falls within the bee-belt, in Europe 'the bee is indigenous almost everywhere'.[4]

(2) Secondly, there are certain arguments based on floral and faunal names. For many reasons, however, the use of this evidence requires great caution. Still it is asserted that the cumulative effect of this evidence points to Europe rather than to Asia as the original home of the Indo-Europeans.

(*a*) Trees and animals, for which some common names are found to exist in two or more of the Indo-European languages, appear to be on the whole indigenous to European soil.

(*b*) On the other hand, the names of trees and animals peculiar to Asia are not found to be so common. It is also pointed out that the Indo-Iranian names of some of the peculiarly Asiatic plants and animals, appear to be late and local in

certainty, though "somewhere in Europe" is at present the reasoned and confident answer of science to a question which fifty years ago produced the merely instinctive but equally confident "somewhere in Asia".'—ERPP., p. 3; see also EZ., p. 5 n. 1.

[1] I, p. 68.

[2] The arguments are a summary of Bender's judicious little book referred to above.

[3] op. cit., p. 19.

[4] op. cit., p. 21.

formation, and the following are offered as examples of this:—(i) the 'first word'[1] for an elephant, referred to in the RV. only twice, is clearly late since mechanical. The Sanskrit name *hastín*=an elephant, really means '(a beast) with a hand'. (ii) The same is the case with the name *nyagródha*=a 'banyan tree' the word meaning 'the down-growing (tree)'.

(*c*) The beech tree[2] is then made a point of special argument. It is believed that the word is 'securely Indo-European', although the original meaning is uncertain. It is declared, that it is decidedly a tree of the temperate region and as such 'does not fit into any realistic picture of the Asiatic origin of the Indo-Europeans'. Further it is added that 'a large part of the Indo-Europeans, those of the west at any rate, lived in prehistoric times within the European beech region'.

(*d*) The silver birch[3] is also similarly treated. The words for a silver birch, it is argued, are 'everywhere the same from Iceland to India'. But this tree does not grow in Europe south of 45°. It is therefore concluded that 'the birch tree alone furnishes a strong probability that the Indo-Europeans came from somewhere north of the 45th parallel and east of the Vistula'.

(3) Thirdly,[4] there is an argument derived from the discovery of the Tocharian language. The Tocharian language discovered in eastern (or Chinese) Turkestan is said to be a centum language, the only centum language that is found in Asia. That all the centum tongues of Europe may have come from this 'limited and isolated territory' is considered *prima facie* improbable and the character of the

[1] Macdonell, A. A., *Sanskṛit Dictionary*, 1924, s.v. *hastín*.
[2] op. cit., pp. 29ff. [3] op. cit., pp. 32-33. [4] op. cit., pp. 44-45.

Tocharian language, together with the fact that the linguistic records of the Tocharians are not older than 500 A.D., are taken to justify the conclusion that 'the Tocharians were relatively late Indo-Celtic emigrants from Europe'.

These arguments, Bender thinks, decidedly point to Europe as the original home of the Indo-Europeans. He then adds, that 'if this be accepted as a working theory, it is possible, by process of elimination, to restrict the place of origin still further', and the above considerations, coupled with the fact that the Indo-Europeans did not know 'the great ocean' make 'the great plain of central and south-eastern Europe' the most probable home of the Indo-European tribes.[1]

There are also some who think that the Indo-Europeans came neither from Asia nor from Europe but from a region which lies partly in both the continents. Thus P. Kretschmer,[2] supported by R. Meringer[3] and B. Symons,[4] thinks that 'a narrow strip of land extending from France over middle Europe and the Kirghese steppes to Iran',[5] was the cradle of the Indo-European civilization, while F. Ratzel finds it in the region '*vom* 35. *Grad n. Br. an südost-nordwestlich bis gegen den Polarkreis zieht, von der Abdachung zum Persischen Meerbusen bis zur Ostsee*'.[6] Dr. Griswold[7] also admits the possibility 'that the Indo-European clans, being largely in the pastoral stage, might have roamed over the great "grassy plain"[8] of central Europe and Asia, extending perhaps from the Danube and the plains of north Germany through southern Russia on into central Asia',

[1] op. cit., pp. 47–50.

[2] *Einleitung in die Geschichte der griechischen Sprache*, 1896.

[3] *Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft*, 1897.

[4] *Het stamland der Indogermanen, Handelingen én Mededeelingen van de Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde te Leiden*, 1898-99.

[5] Schrader, O., *Sprache und Urgeschichte*, 1906, pp. 128-29.

[6] 'Uber den Ursprung und die Wanderungen der Völker', *Berichte der Kgl. Sachsischen Ges. d. W.*—Phil.-hist. Kl., 1898 and 1900, p. 128.

[7] RV., p. 18.

[8] Haddon, A. C., *Wanderings of Peoples*, London, 1911.

adding a note that ' the valleys of the Ural and Volga, Don and Dnieper, and also that of the Danube, would furnish a suitable habitat for the undivided Indo-European tribes '.[1]

There are indeed many more powerful arguments in favour of a European than an Asiatic home, but the view that it lies partly in both the continents appears to us to be more probable. For want of archaeological evidence, however, all efforts to determine the definite region whence the Indo-Europeans spread, are bound to remain merely interesting and ingenious speculations. If we are ever to have a thoroughly satisfactory solution, it must be sought with the help of archaeological finds[2] and ethnological evidence. When ' we can identify the Indo-Europeans racially, ascribe to them definite archaeological remains and designate those remains by their Indo-European names ',[3] we might perhaps find that the Indo-Europeans came from a land which lay partly in Asia and partly in Europe.

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[1] RV., p. 18, n. 7; cf. Meyer, GA., I. ii, pp. 881ff; cf. also ' L'Urheimat dev'essere carcato tra il medio Danubio e il Volga, vale a dire nella regione orientale della zona media del continente europeo.'—E. de Michelis, *L'origine degli Indo-Europei*, 1905, p. 694: quoted by Feist, *Kultur*, p. 503.

[2] cf. Hirt, H., *Die Indogermanen*, I, p. 194. [3] Bender, op. cit., p. 42.

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3. *Sources of Information for I.E. Culture and Religion*

The lack of certain knowledge of the original home of the Indo-Europeans need not stop us from trying to know what we can of the civilization of the common Indo-European period, and in this, philological evidence is our best source. A careful examination and comparison of the vocabularies of the different languages spoken by the various branches of the Indo-European peoples, has enabled us to gain some knowledge of the state of civilization, the social and political institutions and the religious as well as moral ideas of the Indo-European peoples.[1] The misleading character of this evidence has been long recognized; still, it is useful to bear in mind the caution that one should not jump at a conclusion as proved, on the mere evidence of a similarity of a word or two. The science of comparative mythology which is based upon the science of comparative philology is also an important source. Otto Schrader once thought that these two sciences constituted the only sources on which is to be based not only what we know but what we shall ever know, of the religion of the Indo-Europeans.[2] The study of comparative Indo-European institutions as seen in the oldest historical sources, and more recently prehistoric archaeology also furnish some valuable information;[3] but the former being mainly based on philology, and

1 Rapson, J. E., *Ancient India*, 1914, p. 4.
2 *Prehistoric Antiquities of the Aryan Peoples*, Eng. tr., 1890, p. 406.
3 Griswold, RV., p. 7.

the science of archaeology, so far as it concerns the I.E.s at any rate, being in a very undeveloped condition, the first place still belongs to the science of comparative philology. What H. Hirt said at the end of his *Die Indogermanen*[1] holds good to the present day: '*Der Begriff der Indogermanen steht und fällt mit der Sprache.*'

This high position occupied by comparative philology in our sources of information carries with it at least two great disadvantages. In the first place, comparative linguistic material carries us back only to the period just preceding the separation of the Indo-European languages; i.e. to a period, not when the first words were spoken, but to a time when a certain language was well established; and in the history of man this occurs quite late. Thus we are left in absolute darkness with regard to the actual stages of development of this people, in the pre-Indo-European days. It is generally held that the account given by the anthropologists of the stages of civilization through which man has passed, is so fundamental that it must have been common to all races of mankind. For want of any evidence of the pre-Indo-European period to the contrary, we cannot but assume that the Indo-Europeans had also passed through the Early and Later Palaeolithic stages of culture. But so far as mental development is concerned even anthropology does not render us any great assistance. However much the anthropologists may wish, they have not yet been able to tell us, even indirectly, anything that is based on evidence about the mental development of the Indo-Europeans in the pre-Indo-European or prehistoric ages. From the facts that the Indo-Europeans knew something of agriculture, lived in some sort of houses, used polished stone implements, possessed domesticated animals, knew weaving, plate- and pot-making, and buried their dead with some care, it is natural to assume that they belonged to the Neolithic stage of culture. Thus we can with great

[1] II, p. 549.

probability assign them a more or less definite place in the scale of the growth of material culture. But the mental development of these peoples, as portrayed in their language, does not accord well with this crude material culture they possessed.

We fully appreciate the value of the material progress they had made upon the previous ages; but still it appears to us that their mental level is astoundingly and disproportionately high. Not only did they possess a systematic language, but a language which was full of great ideas. Had anybody, in the absence of linguistic evidence, said that the early Indo-Europeans, who were yet in the Neolithic stage of material culture, called man by a name meaning the 'thinking ones' ('*die Denkenden*'),[1] worshipped the sky as their father as well as the sun and the moon, we feel certain he would have been ridiculed by the anthropologists. And the anthropologists could not have been blamed for this. For the material culture which the Indo-Europeans are supposed to have possessed does not warrant every conclusion we derive about the beliefs and practices of the Indo-European peoples from philological evidence.[2] Thus, between these two sciences of anthropology and comparative philology, due to the undeveloped character of anthropology, and also of archaeology on which anthropology depends for its evidence, but still more to the

[1] Sk. *manus*, Goth. *manna*, O. Bulg. *ma*$<^{\check{z}\check{s}}$ '*man*', which might be connected with the I.E. root *men* 'to think' (Sk. *mányate*, 'he thinks', *mánas* 'a mind'=Gk. *μένος* 'courage' 'spirit', Lat. *meminī*=O. Bulg. *mõnja* 'to mind'). Feist, op. cit., p. 98.

[2] This is not, however, to say that the material civilization of the I.E.s did not correspond to their mental advancement. What we wish to point out is that their mental capacity was of a higher kind than the anthropologists, judging solely from the evidence of their material culture, would attribute to them. We find fault with anthropological deductions, rather than quarrel with the less advanced condition of the material civilization of the I.E.s. Neither do we suppose that they were in any way a gifted race; because we hold that whatever capabilities for higher thought they manifested, were due to perfectly natural, but in their case more favourable causes.

cf. the eloquent eulogy of the Aryan (I.E.) race by Schröder, AR., pp. 182–193.

peculiar character of linguistic evidence, there lies today a wide gulf on account of which we cannot know the continuous development of the Indo-European peoples. We must therefore be content to proceed with the Indo-European period without trying to find out the links by which it was connected with the ages previous to it.

Secondly, comparative philology is not always a safe and conclusive guide for the history of primitive institutions. For 'words and symbols do not always carry with them complete and accurate descriptions of things they designate'. To take a modern example, the word *corn* means 'maize' in America, 'wheat' in England, 'oats' in Scotland, 'barley' in Sweden, and 'rye' in Germany.[1]

It is sometimes denied that there even existed a distinct race called the Indo-Europeans: were they not simply '*ein Gemisch von verschiedenen Typen*'.[2] So far as we are concerned, this question does not arise at all. Whether it was a distinct race or not, we know this much for certain, that there was once a group of peoples who lived in some definite region and spoke perhaps different dialects of the same language. Thus when we speak of the Indo-Europeans we do not assume a distinct race, which had lived aloof from other races, or had retained the purity of its blood untarnished and unmixed, but merely a group of these related peoples.[3] We will first give a brief sketch of their civilization and then proceed to give an account of their religion.

### 4. *The Indo-European Culture*

The earliest I.E.s of whom we have any information appear to have possessed a culture which had made great progress over the Palaeolithic stage, when there were no houses, no huts, no clothes or pottery, nor domesticated

[1] Bender, op. cit., p. 34. [2] Feist, *Kultur*, p. 502.

[3] cf. Poussin, IEII., pp. 27–29; '*Il est bien possible que les Indo-européens primitifs formaient déja un mélange de types différents unis par les liens d'une langue et d'une culture identiques.*'—S. Feist, quoted by Poussin, ibid., p. 28.

animals, and when people lived only by hunting and fishing.[1] The I.E.s, from the time to which the common words occurring in the different I.E. languages and from which we derive the information of their culture belong, must have lived a settled, domiciled life, in some well-defined region. They were not at any rate purely nomadic,[2] and the pastoral stage as well as the stage of elementary agriculture appears to have been reached.

They knew how to build wooden houses or huts, that were thatched with straw,[3] and may have sometimes been partially underground. But they also knew naturally fortified places where they could hide in times of danger. Certain words occurring in the various I.E. languages also indicate that they might have built some sort of forts.[4] Building in stone was, however, unknown.

Cattle-breeding was one of the most important occupations of ancient times. This is clear from the fact that cattle remained the standard of value as well as the means of enumeration and counting, for a very long time, even after the separation of the I.E. tribes.[5] For this reason Schröder thinks that the name 'cattle-breeders' (*Viehzüchter*) is the most suitable for these people.[6] Cattle undoubtedly constituted the chief wealth of these people.

The western I.E.s also developed swine-breeding sooner or later, but it is not found among the Aryans or the Indo-Iranians.[7] The cow was undoubtedly the most important domesticated animal for a long time. It did not only provide them with flesh, milk, and hides, but also drew their carriages[8] and perhaps ploughs. The breeding of sheep was also perhaps known at this time. Indeed, Schröder holds that the sheep was the first and the oldest

[1] Schrader, s.v. *Steinzeit*. [2] Schröder, AR., p. 234.
[3] Hirt, *Indogermanen*, p. 383.
[4] Feist, *Kultur*, p. 144; Schrader, s.v. *Stadt*.
[5] Schrader, s.v. *Geld*; Schröder, AR., pp. 234, 281-2; Feist, *Kultur*, p. 147.
[6] AR., p. 234. [7] Schröder, AR., pp. 236-37; M. Much, *Heimat der Indogermanen*, pp. 126ff.
[8] Schröder, AR., p. 235.

domesticated animal of the I.E.s[1] on the evidence of the following and other philological equations: *Sk. *ávi-*, Gk. *ὄϊξ*, Lat. *ovis*, Ir. *ói*. O.H.G. *ou*, Lith. *awìs*, O. Sl. *ovĭca*,[2] Eng. *ewe*. According to M. Much,[3] the first domesticated animal of the I.E.s was the she-goat. They, at any rate, knew this animal.[4] The dog was domesticated very early and hunting with dogs may have been familiar.

The horse was also known and domesticated. Its flesh was eaten and special importance was attached to offering it in sacrifice. The prehistoric finds of the Palaeolithic age show that both the horse and the cow were the domestic slaughter animals. Through their frequent slaughter and sacrifice the I.E.s came to possess quite an intimate knowledge of the parts of the body of cattle. To Schröder it appears very probable that the I.E.s used the horse for riding as well as drawing and that some primitive form of racing (*das Wethrennen*) was known.[5] Schröder thinks that the use of the horse for the war-chariot originated in the land of the Euphrates and the Tigris and that it thence spread to India, Iran, and Greece. Professor Winternitz[6] opposes this view, while, according to Schröder, 'the wild horse was a native of Europe and was domesticated by the I.E.s'. Hehn,[7] on the other hand, seeks to prove that the European domesticated animals, in general, came from these countries to Europe. Schröder says that he can see no good argument in favour of this conclusion, and adds that 'from what we know, the early I.E.s appear to have been quite capable of domesticating and rearing animals'.[8]

[1] Schrader, pp. 707-8.
[2] ibid., p. 707; Feist, *Kultur*, p. 149.
[3] op. cit., p. 194.
[4] Schröder, AR., p. 236.
[5] Compare with this H. G. Wells, *Outline of History*, London, 1923, p. 137a:
'The early Āryans (=I.E.s) did not ride or drive horses; they had very little to do with horses. The Reindeer men were a horse-people, but the Neolithic Āryans were a cow-people. They ate beef not horse.'
[6] 'Was wissen wir von den Indogermanen?', *Beilage zur Allg. Ztg.*, 1903, Nr. 238, 239, 246, 252, 253.
[7] *Kulturpflanzen und Haustiere*, Berlin, 1870.
[8] AR., p. 235; Much, op. cit., p. 181.

Historical, archaeological, and philological evidence available, makes it certain that the western branch of the I.E.s had a knowledge of agriculture from a very early period and as the list of common words shows, it was by no means very elementary.[1] Schröder indeed thinks that agriculture in Europe goes back to the Palaeolithic age.[2] But no common words for either agricultural implements, or agricultural products are to be found in the Indo-Iranian vocabularies,[3] and an adequate explanation of this has been a matter of some difficulty. It, however, appears to be probable that during the I.E. period proper cattle-breeding was the most predominant occupation, while agriculture was in its most rudimentary stage. The western branch, after their separation from the common stock but while they were yet more or less united among themselves, soon developed it, perhaps owing to contact with the people who then occupied Europe and to whom a somewhat more advanced agriculture was known. The eastern branch, however, had no occasion to use the little knowledge of agriculture they possessed, as they passed over lands which were unsuitable for agriculture.[4] But the idea that some sort of corn can be obtained from land, was not altogether forgotten and later became the nucleus of Indo-Iranian and Indo-Aryan agriculture. Finding no use for agriculture they kept to the old cattle-breeding. Sk. *yávas*, Av. *yava*, Pers. *jav*, Gk. ζειαί, Ir. *eorna*, Lit. *javas*, pl. *javaĭ*, however, unmistakably show that at least one kind of grain was known during the united I.E. period.[5]

[1] Schrader,[2] s.v. *Ackerbau*, I, pp. 6ff., and also 104–79; Schröder, AR., pp. 238–40; Feist, *Kultur*, pp. 164–79; Hirt, *Indogermanen*, pp. 251–9.

[2] Schrader,[2] pp. 7-8.

[3] ibid., p. 5; Schröder, AR., pp. 238-39.

[4] H. Hirt's explanation that the eastern branch of the I.E.s also had common words for agricultural implements and products, but that they were 'forgotten through disuse' does not appear to be probable. H. Hirt, IF., I, pp. 474ff; V, pp. 395ff. See also Schrader,[2] I, p. 10; Hirt, *Indogermanen*, p. 255.

[5] Feist, *Kultur*, p. 165; Schröder, AR., p. 239.

Among the I.E.s of the western branch, as long as they remained together, there was as yet no individual ownership in land and as compared with the manly pursuits of hunting and fishing, agriculture was looked down upon.[1] It is possible that it was for this prejudice against agriculture as an occupation that the agricultural Vaiśyas of India ranked below the Kṣatriyas or the warrior class.[2]

There can be no doubt that hunting was known to and practised by the I.E.s in spite of the fact that a common word is lacking.[3] Bears and wolves were hunted, not only because they were dangerous to men, but also for their flesh and hides.[4]

From archaeological remains found in what are known as the 'kitchen-middens' in Denmark, and in Swiss lake-dwellings, it is inferred that fishing was known; but here also common words are wanting. Von Schröder, however, still maintains that fishing was known, arguing that absence of a common word does not necessarily mean that the thing was unknown in I.E. times, e.g. he says that milk was undoubtedly known, although no common word can be found.[5]

The I.E.s ate flesh as well as vegetables. The flesh of domestic animals was however more extensively used. The greater use of flesh probably explains the fact that salt was not used, since a common word for salt is not found[6] among all the branches of the I.E.s. Among the western I.E.s a common word for salt exists, but neither in the *Avesta* nor in the *Ṛigveda* is there any word for salt at all.[7] As we learn from the Swiss pile-dwellings, a solid heavy bread might have been prepared from wheat, barley or millet, and milk also was probably used. Perhaps they prepared some sort of cheese[8] also, and butter was 'apparently used more as a

[1] Schrader,[2] I, p. 10[a]; Hirt, *Indogermanen*, p. 251.
[2] Feist, *Kultur*, p. 179.
[3] Schrader, p. 384. [4] ibid., pp. 384-5; Schröder, AR., p. 240.
[5] ibid., n. 2.
[6] Griswold, RV., p. 8, Schröder, AR., p. 241, Schrader, s.v., *Saltz*, p. 700.
[7] ibid. [8] ibid., s.v. *Käse*.

salve or ointment than for food'.[1] They ate some wild fruits and drank an intoxicating drink made from honey, Sk. *mádhu*, Av. *maδu* or *maδa*='intoxicating drink' (Sk. *mad*, 'to intoxicate'), Gk. *μέθυ*, Ir. *mid*, O.Sl. *medŭ*, O. Pers. *meddo*, Lith. *midus*, *medús*.[2]

For clothing, skins were used from the oldest times, but since the I.E.s were familiar with weaving wool, an upper cloth fastened with a needle of bone may have been used. But no underclothing or head-cover was known. Some sort of footwear also may have been used.[3] Teeth of animals, ivory, and stone pearls appear to have been used as ornaments.[4] Long hair and beards were perhaps worn.[5]

The I.E.s made use of quite a variety of weapons. Bows and arrows were long known, and to them were added the knife, spear, javelin or lance, axe, hatchet, hammer, and probably the club also. Although the sword itself was unknown, flint daggers were used. The various finds of the Palaeolithic age show that spear-heads were sometimes made of bone.[6] It is possible that they used leather or wooden shields for protection, but this is rather uncertain. Helmets and armour were, however, certainly not known.[7]

Among household utensils earthen pots were certainly used. Sometimes they are found with decorations. They were, however, still made without the potter's wheel or the potter's oven. They had also whetstones or grinders, hammers, axes, hatchets, knives and needles.[8] No furniture could have been known, but skins and mats may have been used to sit upon. Probably men and animals lived under the same roof, as is found in some places in Switzerland.

In addition to spinning and weaving, they also knew how to tan hides. They built carriages, houses, and huts as

[1] Griswold, RV., pp. 7-8; Schrader,[2] s.v. *Butter*, I, pp. 175ff. and Schrader, p. 542.

[2] Schrader,[2] s.vv. *Biene*, *Bienenzucht*, I, p. 139.

[3] Schrader, s.v. *Kleidung*. [4] Schröder, AR., p. 243.

[5] Zimmer, AIL., p. 264; Schröder, AR., p. 243.

[6] Schrader, s.v. *Waffen*; Schröder, AR., p. 244.

[7] ibid., p. 245. [8] Schrader, p. 925; Schröder, AR., p. 248.

well as boats. All these arts, however, must have been in a very undeveloped condition. Common words for the various parts of the carriage are found; e.g. I.E. *achse*, Sk. *áksa*, Gk. ἄξων, Lat. *axis*, O.H.G. *ahsa*, A.S. *éax*, O. Nor. *öxu*, O.Sl. *osi*, Lat. *axis*.[1] So is there a common word for a boat: Sk. *nâus*, Gk. νᾶυς, Lat. *navis*, Ir. *nói*, O. Nor. *nór*. According to Schrader[2] a *nâus* could have meant nothing else than *'ausgehöhlter Baumstamm'*, i.e. a 'hollowed tree-trunk', because the primitive boats were very simple and made out of the hollowed trunk of a tree. Carts and boats must have been the principal means of travel.

I.E. trade consisted of barter only. As pointed out above, the cow was the standard of value. They knew the numbers from 1 to 10 and 100.[3]

The measure of time was simple and primitive. The different parts of the day might have been distinguished by the different positions of the sun, from which was probably derived the coca of the sun as the measurer of the day found in the *Ṛigveda*. The year was divided into two parts and called by the name of the two seasons, summer and winter. Spring was only the beginning of summer and was not recognized as a separate season. The moon also was the measure of time as indicated by the old names coming from the root *ma*, 'to measure': Sk. *mās*, *māsa* (Eng. *moon* and *month*, Ger. *Mond*, *Monat*), Av. *mâonh*, *mâoṅha*, Gk. μήνη, Goth. *mêna*, Lith. *ménů*.

A month distinguished by the course of the moon, was divided into two parts, the new moon and the full moon.[4]

The basis of the patriarchal joint family appears to have been clearly established, since common names for father, mother, brother, son, daughter, father's brother, mother's brother, father-in-law, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, nephew, etc., are found.[5] Moreover, the form of

[1] Schrader,[2] I, p. 6. [2] Schrader, p. 711. [3] Griswold, RV., p. 8.
[4] Schröder, AR., p. 250; Schrader, pp. 548, 393.
[5] Griswold, RV., p. 3; Feist, *Kultur*. See the various articles in Schrader.

relationship in the family appears to have already been agnatic. Those persons who were related through the mother are in general called by a name which means 'those that are related', thus clearly preserving the secondary or formal character of this relationship (Sk. *bándhu* from *bandh*, 'to bind'; Gk. *bhendh*).[1] Whether this patriarchal family was, in the pre-I.E. days, preceded by the so-called 'matriarchate', '*Mutterrecht*' or '*Mutterfolge*', according to which descent was reckoned from the mother, is disputed, but such a possibility is generally admitted.[2] Without this assumption it is said that certain elements of the I.E. family organization would be inexplicable,[3] but that there is no trace of its existence in the I.E. period appears to be undoubted.[4]

The lot of the wife, as well as the daughter-in-law, who came into the family of her husband after the marriage, does not seem to have been an easy one.[5] While the husband fought battles and hunted, the wife had to look after the home and take care of the children.[6] The head of the family has extensive powers, both over the members of the family and the family property.[7] On account of the constant fighting, men were always wanted and sons were thus very highly desired, while the birth of a daughter was deprecated and girl infants were often exposed. I.E. marriage seems to have been either by purchase or capture,[8] and the wife was treated as nothing better than a commodity purchased or captured. This accords well with the facts that a common word for marriage is lacking[9] and that marriage was later called by a name meaning 'lordship' (*patitva*) of the husband over the wife.[10] Although the existence of a strict tribal law in favour of monogamy is improbable, polygamy

1 Schrader,[2] I, p. 285. 2 Schrader, p. 566; Griswold, RV., p. 10.
3 Schrader, p. 566. cf. Jolly, *Sitte u. Recht*, p. 85f; Schröder, AR., p. 255f.
4 ibid., pp. 251ff.
5 Griswold, RV., p. 9. 6 Feist, *Kultur*, p. 106.
7 Griswold, RV., p. 9. 8 ibid., Schröder, AR., p. 255.
9 Schrader,[2] s.v., *Ehe*; Feist, *Kultur*, p. 108f.
10 Griswold, RV., p. 10; Schrader,[2] I, p. 216; Feist, *Kultur*, p. 109.

does not appear to have been very common. The very old custom of exogamy possibly existed. Some traces of the practice of '*sati*', i.e. the voluntary burning of the widow with her dead husband, and also of a distinct prejudice against second marriage of the widows, are found among the various branches of the I.E.s and so these customs may have been current in very primitive times.

There is no evidence to show that any formal political union existed. A number of joint families lived in a village (*viś*) and a number of such villages probably formed a clan. The members of the clan were loosely united by birth, speech, and custom. But in times of danger, and especially when attacked by a rival clan, they may have acted together. Neither clan-lords nor king appear to have existed. Dr. Griswold, judging from the common name Ārya, thinks that the existence of political 'federation' goes back to the Indo-Iranian period.[1] It is probable that in the Indo-Iranian period there may have existed definite clans with a recognized or a chosen head who governed the clan.

[1] RV., pp. 10-11.

## CHAPTER V

# THE INDO-EUROPEAN RELIGION

*'Water the limpid flowing, welling up or running dry; fire the illuminating, kindled or quenched; air unseen by the eye, but sensible to ear and touch; earth the nourishing, out of which everything grows and into which all that has grown dissolves; these, to mankind from the earliest time, have appeared sacred and venerable; ceremonies, transactions, and events in life first receive their solemn consecration from them. Working as they do with never resting activity and force on the whole of nature, the childlike man bestows on them his veneration....Even today the majesty and might of these eldest born of things awake our admiration; how could antiquity have forborne its astonishment and adoration? Such worship is simpler, freer, and more dignified than a senseless crouching before pictures and idols.'*[1]

### *The Indo-European Gods: (a) Dyeus*

'It is emphasised,' says Schrader, 'in the most unmistakable fashion, by unbiassed authorities, with regard to the most diverse sections of the old Aryan (I.E.) racial territory, that the worship of the sky and the powers of nature connected with it, formed the real kernel of the Aryan religion.'[2] The words in the two philologically well established equations {Sk. *Dyaús* (*pitár*), Gk. *Ζεύς*, Lat. *Dies* (*-piter*), *Jupitar* (Jû-piter=*Ζεῦπάτερ* ancient vocative), O. Nor. *Týr*, O.H.G *Ziu*, meaning 'sky' or the 'father sky'[3] and Sk. *devá*, Ir. *dia*, Lith. *deva-s*, Lat. *deus*, O. Nor. *tivar*, meaning 'the heavenly one' or 'the bright one'}[4] have been

[1] Grimm, TM., p. 583. [2] 'Aryan Religion', ERE., II, p. 33a.

[3] Schrader, AR., p. 33; see also Bloomfield, RV., pp. 110-11; Macdonell, VM., p. 8; Schrader, AR., pp. 300–302; Griswold, RV., p. 14; Wilke, RI., p. 107; Feist, *Kultur*, pp. 338-339; Meyer, GA., I² (1913), p. 867; Hirt, *Indogermanen*, p. 506 (1907); Grimm, TM., I, pp. 193ff.

[4] Schrader, AR., pp. 15-16; Usener, *Götternamen*, Berlin (1896), p. 178; and see Schrader, AR., Griswold, RV., Wilke, RI., etc., as in n. 3.

of, ived from the same common root like the Sk. *div*, 'to shine', or 'to radiate'. From these two equations we can draw two conclusions: firstly, that the original I.E. conception of a god was connected with light; and secondly, the god 'sky' as the bearer of all light in general or 'the light of day'[1] in particular, was probably the predominant nature-god.

As the various words for 'sky' mentioned above show, the worship of the shining sky as the 'father-god' was widespread among the I.E. nations, but for the characteristics and attributes of this god we have almost wholly to depend upon what we know of the Vedic God *Dyauṣ-pitár*. The other literatures in which the word occurs have preserved but few traces of the original character of this god. Among the Greeks and the Romans he is the greatest god of the sky, while among the Teutons he is the greatest god of war.[2] In the *Ṛigveda* he is called a father[3] and invoked as 'Father Heaven' (*dyauṣ-pitár*) along with 'Mother Earth' (*pṛthivī-mātar*). He is the 'great father',[4] the 'lofty'[5] and the 'lofty abode'.[6] He is a bull[7] that bellows;[8] a black steed decked with pearls.[9] Like nearly all the greater gods of the *Ṛigveda* Dyaus is sometimes called *asura*.[10] The phenomenon of visible sky being always present before the poet's eye, anthropomorphism, even in the *Ṛigveda*, does not go beyond the notion of paternity. Dyaus is not celebrated in any independent hymn of the *Ṛigveda*, while *Pṛthivī* 'the earth' has a short hymn dedicated to her alone. There are, however, six hymns in which they are invoked together, the two appearing in a dual compound *Dyāvā-pṛthivī*. Heaven and earth are together spoken of as *deva-putre*, 'they whose sons are gods'.[11] They are the parents

[1] See Carnoy, IE., pp. 162–4.
[2] ERE., II, p. 33b; Schrader, AR., I, p. 484; Wilke, RI., pp. 108-9.
[3] I, 90. 7; 164, 33; IV, 1. 10.
[4] I, 71. 5.
[5] I, 54. 3.
[6] V, 47. 7.
[7] I, 160. 3; V, 36. 5.
[8] V, 58. 6.
[9] X, 68. 11.
[10] I, 122. 1; 131. 1; VIII, 20. 17.
[11] VII, 53. 1; 185. 4; IV, 56. 2.

of Agni as well as Indra and they protect all creatures and bestow treasures, fame, and dominion.[1]

What was exactly the position of this god in the early I.E. period is a matter of dispute. Bradke in his *Dyaus Asura*[2] sought to prove, that the I.E. polytheism was of a monarchial character, with Father-Heaven as the patriarchal head. This view was opposed by, among others, Oldenberg and Macdonell. Oldenberg admits the possibility that Dyaus may have occupied a high position among the gods, and that he may have been recognized as their father, but says that this fatherhood could not have been taken so seriously as to justify the conclusion that he was the recognized supreme head of an ordered pantheon.[3] Schrader agrees with this view,[4] and Macdonell makes the following comment: 'as the universal Father who with Mother-Earth embraced all other deified objects and phenomena, he would have been the greatest among the deities of a chaotic polytheism. But to speak of him as the Supreme God of the I.E. age is misleading, because this suggests a ruler of the type of Zeus, and an incipient monotheism for an extremely remote period, though neither of these conceptions had been arrived at in the earlier Ṛigvedic times.'[5]

But although the view of Bradke was thus rejected by competent authorities and is quite improbable, Schröder, treating the question at great length, seeks to prove that the god of heaven (*Himmelsgott*) was the highest creation of the I.E. period. He sums up the conclusion as follows: '*Die arischen* (=I.E.) *Völker glaubten und verehrten schon in der Urzeit einen höchsten Gott, der im Himmel wohnend, im Himmel sich offenbarend, vom Himmel aus wirkend und zugleich ihr höchstes gutes Wesen bildete. Sie nannten Djêus, den Leuchtenden, Lichten, den Himmel oder den Himmlischen.*'[6] To maintain this view the author examines the mythologies

[1] Griswold, RV., pp. 98-99. [2] p. 110. [3] Oldenberg, RV., p. 34, n. 1.
[4] AR., p. 33[a]. [5] VM., p. 22.
[6] *Arische Religion*, I, p. 568.

of all the important branches of the I.E. peoples and tries to find justification for it. So far as this view is based on Indian and Iranian mythologies, at any rate, Schröder's position does not appear to be well grounded. He first observes that the epithets Father (*pitér*) and Lord (*asura*) are characteristic appellations of Dyaus alone, and that it is from Dyaus and not from Varuṇa—whose conception as an *Asura* is itself derived from that of Dyaus—that the Iranian name *Ahura-Mazda* is derived. In our opinion, the epithet *Asura* was applied to Dyaus in the same indiscriminate manner that it was applied to other Vedic gods, and no special importance can be attached to this fact. Moreover, if the Iranian Ahura-Mazda was based on Dyaus, we should have found, either that Ahura-Mazda was intimately connected with the notion of fatherhood or that Dyaus was with the notion of the moral sovereignty of the universe. Because it is undeniable that the Iranian Ahura-Mazda is the great moral ruler, while the Vedic Dyaus and almost as certainly the I.E. Dyeus is as the Father of the good and, in the *Ṛigveda*, of men also.

It is also worth noticing how Schröder tries to account for the curious fact that the word *asura* in later Sanskrit literature comes to mean 'a demon'. He says that originally the word had two meanings. In one sense it meant 'Lord' and in the other a 'spirit'. In the former sense it was applied to gods, while in the latter sense it came to mean 'a demon'. The Iranians were familiar only with the good sense, while the Vedic Indians were familiar with both. This suggestion is indeed ingenious but hardly probable. If the word was Indo-Iranian it is difficult to understand why one branch of the Indo-Iranian should be familiar with both the senses and the other with only one.

In spite of Oldenberg holding to the contrary,[1] the notion of Sky as the father of 'Heavenly Ones' is, in our opinion, the oldest and the one that was most closely connected with

[1] RV., p. 34, n. 2.

the god Dyaus. This conception of Father-Heaven and Mother-Earth as universal parents is not only found in the Vedic and the Greek mythologies but is familiar to the mythologies of China, New Zealand, and may also be traced in that of Egypt.[1] It arose from the simple facts that the sky holds in its wide expanse all 'the Heavenly Ones' whom the I.E.s worshipped, and that bending down on Mother-Earth he fertilizes her with rain, which is the seed.[2] It is also probable that the fatherhood of the sky was not spoken of only figuratively but with strict 'literality',[3] the idea of sky as the father, earth as the mother, and the deified heavenly phenomena as their children, being a reflection of human society.[4] Separated from the idea of fatherhood, it is hard to conceive why he was made a god at all, since that is the only characteristic that we can attribute to him with any certainty.

It is also noteworthy that this god of heaven, disregarding his connexion with the earth, is singularly free from being entangled in any myths. The Greek Zeus is indeed an exception, as he is a highly mythical figure. But these myths are on the whole of purely Greek origin, where the original Dyeus was associated with the Sun- and the Moon-myths.[5] Among most of the other peoples, however, Dyeus is free from myths. For this reason, Schröder considers him to be the truest embodiment of the conception of god (*das er den Gottesbegriff am reinsten verkörpert*).[6] The unmythological character of this god is probably due to the visible phenomenon of the sky being ever present before the eyes of the worshippers, and the fact that through all the active phenomena of the sky being formed into separate divinities he soon became a very passive god.

Nor does Dyaus appear to have ever received any high attributes, as Varuṇa received the personification

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 8, and the references there given; Tylor, PC., 1920, I, pp. 322ff. [2] Griswold, RV., p. 14; E. Meyer, GA., p. 867.
[3] W. R. Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, 1894, pp. 29-30; Wilke, RI., p. 109.
[4] Griswold, RV., p. 102. [5] Wilke, RI., p. 110. [6] AR., pp. 578–81.

of the 'spreading, encompassing sky'. Varuṇa was also a much more active god. He was the king, the moral ruler of the universe, and as such, bound to receive exalted praise until the necessity of changing times compelled a change in gods. The case with Dyaus was altogether different, no high office ever being bestowed upon him. Thus there appears no need to assume that he was superseded by Varuna. In our opinion the decline in the importance—such as was ever attached to him—was natural for the following three reasons:

(i) his passive character,
(ii) his undeveloped anthropomorphism,
and (iii) his unmythological and unsacrificial character.

His passive character was also responsible for the fact that he was never made a prominent object of sacrifice. In the *Ṛigveda* he is even surpassed by his wife, the earth, since there is no separate hymn addressed to him, while a short one is addressed to the earth. The truth is that although the unfathomable expanse of the sky and the light pervading it had made a great impression on the I.E.s in early times, Dyaus only represented a passive phenomenon, and even the earth attracted more attention.

The more intimate connexion of the earth with human life was not difficult to perceive. She was the mother of various plants and trees, of every stream great and small, of 'mountains lofty and valleys deep'. On her grew all food for man and beast; in her wide bosom did birds, kine, horses, and mortals find a secure home, and she afforded the same support to the wise as to the foolish. All living creatures dwelt in her, and when life's weary course was run, returned to her spacious bosom for eternal rest.[1] In the case of Dyaus, on the other hand, the light was considered to be the most important benefit derived from him. But this was soon attributed to the sun and the moon and ceased to have any special connexion with Dyaus. Thus his parent-

[1] cf. AV. VII, 1. 2–5, 15, 27, 42, and 48.

hood of the various phenomena of the sky, and of the living creatures in conjunction with the earth, was the only idea that could continue to exist.

### (*b*) *Varuṇa*

It is also probable that there existed in I.E. times another god of the sky, who is called Varuṇa in the *Ṛigveda*. The equation Sk. *Varuṇa*=Gk. *Οὐρανός*, although presenting some phonetic difficulty, is regarded as probable, and on this ground the Vedic god Varuṇa is considered by many competent scholars to belong to the I.E. period. Bloomfield thinks that Gk. *Οὐρανός* is I.E. *ṷorṷ-ṇnos* or *ṷorṷ-enos* and that Sanskṛit *Varuṇas* is I.E. *ṷorṷ-nos* and regards the two forms as differing no more than, for instance, Vedic *nūtanas* and *nūtnas* 'recent', or Greek *στεγανός* and *στεγνός* 'covered'.[1] Both the words are commonly derived from a root which in Sk. is *vṛ* 'to cover', 'to encompass', and from the number of scholars[2] who have supported this etymology, the above derivation may be taken to be well established. Thus, in the I.E. period, *ṷorṷ-ṇnos*, or *ṷorṷ-enos* probably represented the encompassing sky.[3]

In Greek mythology Oὐranós is represented as an ancestor of Zeus.[4] In the opinion of Dr. Griswold this perhaps reveals a consciousness of his great antiquity, and further, he thinks that in I.E. times Zeus (*Dyaus*) and Oὐranós (*Varuṇas*) were perhaps appellations of the one physical fact of the sky, Zeus 'the bright', from some such root as *div* 'to shine', and Oὐranós 'the encircling' from *vṛ* 'to

[1] Bloomfield, RV., p. 136; cf. also Grassman, Petersberg, and Barth, RI., p. 16.

[2] Macdonell, VM., p. 28; Hopkins, RI., pp. 66 n., 70; Hillebrandt, VM., I, pp. 9–14; Müller, *Chips*, IV, p. xiii f; Keith, IM., p. 25; Brugmann, *Grundriss*, II, p. 154; Prellwitz, *Etym. Wörterbuch d. gr. Sprache*; Schröder, AR., p. 322.

[3] Bloomfield, RV., p. 137; Schröder, ibid.; Macdonell, VM., p. 28, etc.

[4] 'The Zeus of Hesiodic mythology is described as the grandson of an older god Ouranos.'—A. B. Cook, *Zeus*, Cambridge, 1914, I, p. 8.

encompass', two names of the same thing, or one perhaps an epithet of the other.[1]

It is noteworthy how the two sky-gods, the Vedic Dyaus and Varuṇa, and the Greek Zeus and Uranus (which is the Latinized form of Oúranós) met with different and altogether opposite fates at the hands of the Indians and the Greeks. In the Indian mythology it is Varuṇa, and in the Greek it is Zeus, who survive till the present day, while the other two gods almost wholly disappear.[2]

### (c) *The Mother Earth*

As we have already seen, the conception of sky as father and earth as mother, and both together as universal parents, belongs to a very remote antiquity and is to be found in the mythologies of many nations.[3] Whether it was the sky or the earth who was formed into a divinity first is uncertain, but among the I.E.s, it was probably the sky, since the very idea of a god appears to be very closely connected with its name.

Wilke, however, puts the conception of earth as mother, even before that of the sky, and in his work *Die Religion der Indogermanen*,[4] devotes three times as much space to it. He thinks that the conception of the mother, earth, as the source of all earthly plant, animal and human lives, is the oldest and the most important.[5] For this activity of hers she becomes 'the goddess of fertility' (*Fruchtbarkeitsgottheit*). On the other hand she is conceived of as the goddess of death, since she receives within herself everything that is

1 Griswold, RV., pp. 112-13; see also Wilke, RI., p. 107.

2 Schröder, AR., pp. 445ff.

3 Macdonell, VM., p. 8; Griswold, RV., p. 99. 4 p. 97.

5 This comparatively closer relationship of the Earth is well preserved in the Maori legend mentioned by Tylor (Tylor, PC., 1930, p. 322): 'When Tanemahuta, father of forests, said to his five great brethren, "Let the Sky become as a stranger to us, but the Earth remain close to us as our nursing mother".' And on p. 326 Tylor himself remarks, 'The idea of the Earth as a mother is more simple and obvious, and no doubt for that reason more common in the world, than the idea of Heaven as a father'.

dead, e.g. the withered flower, as well as the dead man and animal. Both of these conceptions are natural enough and may have existed in the most primitive times, as they require practically no abstract thinking. Philologically, however, the connexion of words for earth in the different I.E. languages is not quite apparent:

We have Sk. *kṣấs*, Gen. *gmás*, *jmás*, *kṣmás*, Av. *Zå*, Gen. *zemô*, New Persian *Zemî*, Gk. *χθών*, *χθονός*, *χαμαί*, Lat. *humus*, Lith. *z'ēme*, O. St. *zemlja*;[1] but the derivation of all these words is uncertain.[2]

In the *Ṛigveda* Pṛthivī, the 'goddess of earth', frequently receives the epithet 'mother' when mentioned with Dyaus, and is spoken of as 'kindly Mother Earth' to whom the dead man, in a funeral hymn (X, 18. 10) is exhorted to go. Like Dyaus, she has attained but an incipient degree of anthropomorphism. She is great (*mahī*), firm (*dṛḷhā*), and shining (*arjunī*), who bears mountains, supports trees, and quickens the soil with rain.[3] Heaven and earth are in the *Ṛigveda* more specially prayed to, to 'protect from fearful danger'.[4]

'Like your own son upon his parent's bosom,'[5]

'Father and Mother, with your help preserve us.'[6]

The following Anglo-Saxon stanza:

'Hāl wes þu, Folde, fira mōder,
bēo þu grōwende on godes fæþme,
fōdre gefylled, firum to nythe;'[7]
(Hail to thee, O Earth! the Mother of men,
May thou be fruitful in god's embrace.
Yielding food, for the use of men),

compares well with what we find in the *Ṛigveda*, although here the prayer is not addressed only to the earth, but to both heaven and earth.

1 Schrader[2], s.v. *Erde*. 2 ibid.; see also Schrader, pp. 670-71.
3 Macdonell, VM., p. 88. 4 I, 185.
5 I, 185. 2c. 6 I, 185. 10d.
7 Feist, *Kultur*, p. 341; Wilke, RI., p. 97.

'Ye regents of this world,[1] parents of god who aid with favour,[2] pour into us the seed that benefits men,[3] and make food increase plenteously for us.'[4]

Similar thoughts are found expressed by the Greek and the Latin poets.[5] For example, we read in the Homeric hymns: 'I will sing of the Earth, the universal mother, the spouse of the starry Oúranós, who feeds all creatures that are on the ground.'[6]

### (*d*) *The God of Thunder*

With the notion of the sky-god as the father, was probably connected the notion of the various phenomena that actually have or are believed to have their origin in the sky. The sky was both conceived as a god and also as the father of the gods. So the conception of the other natural powers as gods was simultaneously held. Now in the sky, there is no other phenomenon which could have 'arrested the imagination and moved the feelings of men' so much as the phenomenon of the thunderstorm.[7] This is particularly the case over the whole of northern Europe as is indicated by the following equation:

O.H.G. *donar*, O.L.G. *thunar*, O. Nors. *thórr* connected with Sk. *stanayati* 'it thunders', Lat. *tonat*, *tonitrus*, A.S. *punian*, *þunor*, O.H.G. *donar*, Celtic *torannos*, Ir. *torann*, Welsh *tarann*, Cornish, *taran* 'thunder'.[8]

There is also another, but phonetically very doubtful equation: Sk. *parjánya*, Lith. *perkúnas*, O. Sl. *perun*.[9] Schrader is of opinion that these are obviously related to one another, but remarks that, 'the exact nature of this

[1] *Rājantī asya bhuvanasya rodasī*, RV., VI, 70. 2c.
[2] *Avasāvantī devaputre*, RV., I, 185. 4ab.
[3] *Asme retaḥ sincataṁ yanmanurhitam*, VI, 70. 2d.
[4] VI, 70. 6a.
[5] Muir, V, pp. 24ff. See also ch. I, i, pp. 214–16.
[6] ibid., p. 25.
[7] Schrader, AR., p. 33b.
[8] cf. also Gk. *Zeus Keraunios*, ERE., XII, p. 253a; Schrader, s.v. *Gewitter*.
[9] Schrader, p. 295 and Muir, V, p. 142; for comparison between *parjánya* and *perkúnas*, see G. Bühler, in the *Transactions of the London Philological Society*, 1859, pp. 154ff. and in Benfey's *Orient und Occident*, 1862, I, pp. 214ff.

relationship is not yet determined'.[1] There is, however, no doubt that in character the Lith. *perkúnas* agrees well with the Vedic *parjánya* (the rain god) but, although often identified, phonetic connexion between them is denied.[2] Bloomfield admits the 'slight phonetic difficulty', but suggests that the word has been modulated euphemistically so as to suggest the idea of 'guarding the folk' (*pari* 'about' and *jana* 'folk').[3]

Liden in his *Armenische Studien*[4] discusses the various words for thunder and derives the Slavonic *perunŭ* and Lith. *perkúnas* from the appellative signification[5] 'thunder', as does Schrader. He then places both the words beside O. Sl. *pera, pĭrati* and Armen. *harkanen,* aor. *hari* (cf. also Armen. *orot* 'thunder') both of which mean 'to beat', and then attempts to connect the Vedic *parjánya* with this. 'If this is correct,' says Schrader, 'then there would lie in the Vedic *parjánya,* Sl. *perunŭ,* Lith. *perkúnas,* a primitive Aryan (I.E.) word for thunder, with the fundamental significance of the 'beating one'.[6] The original etymology of the word is, however, admitted to be doubtful.[7]

The main characteristic of the thunder-god, in the I.E. period, must have been from the very beginning associated with the terrific noise of the thunder and the idea that it shakes the whole earth with its might, referring more particularly to the thundering sound and the force of the lightning than an actual experience of the shaking of the earth, may have also been present from the beginning.[8] This we

[1] Schrader, AR., p. 33b.

[2] Macdonell, VM., pp. 8 and 84-85; Schrader, loc. cit.; Hirt, IF., I, pp. 481-2; Kaegi, RV., note 139.

[3] Bloomfield, RV., p. 111. [4] Götenberg, 1906, p. 88.

[5] Macdonell, VM., pp. 84-85, where he remarks as follows: 'The freshness of the conception in the RV. renders it probable, that if the two names *perkúnas* and *parjánya* are really connected, their I.E. form was still an appellative.'

[6] AR., p. 33b.

[7] Bloomfield, RV., p. 111; Hirt, IF., I, p. 436; Kretschmer, *Einleitung,* p. 81.

[8] See Carnoy, IE., p. 191.

find portrayed clearly in the *Ṛigveda* (I, 64. 8) where Rudra is spoken of as one 'who roars like a lion'. Rudra's very name too is derived from the root *ru* 'to roar',[1] or according to Indian scholars from the root *rud* 'to cry', i.e. a 'howler'.[2] The idea of the lightning as a peculiar weapon of this god was also quite natural, as soon as the slightest advance towards personification was made. Thus it appears to us that whatever be the phonetic difficulties in accepting the above statement of Liden, the conception of the thunder-god as the beating one is very probable.

In the *Ṛigveda* we find two gods who appear to have been based on the phenomenon of the thunderstorm, viz. Indra and Rudra. When however they become prominent gods—as Indra in the *Ṛigveda* itself, and Rudra in the post-Vedic literature—their physical basis is almost wholly lost sight of. But the great impression that the thunderstorm makes on the minds of men is amply preserved in the characterization of both gods. Indra is the warrior god of the Vedic Indians *par excellence*. The thunder-bolt, the idea of which was possibly suggested by the crash of lightning, is his special weapon, and heaven and earth tremble with fear, when he strikes Vṛtra with his bolt.[3] Of unbounded force[4] and of irresistible might[5] he surpasses all gods[6] who yield to him in might and strength. Rudra is also once spoken of as bearing the thunder-bolt in his arm[7] and his lightning shaft (*didyut*) discharged from the sky traverses the earth.[8] He is described in the *Ṛigveda* as fierce and destructive like a terrible beast;[9] the unsurpassed,[10] unassailable,[11] the strongest of the strong.[12]

Macdonell agrees with Oldenberg, in the view that 'beside the thundering god of heaven, the I.E. period may

[1] Wilke, RI., p. 110.
[2] Macdonell, VM., p. 77; Weber, I.St., ii, pp. 19–22; see also, *Śat.* IX, 1. 1. 6.
[3] I, 80. 11; II, 19. 9, 10; VI, 17. 9. [4] I, 11. 4; 102. 6.
[5] I, 84. 2. [6] III, 46. 3. [7] II, 33. 3. [8] VII, 46. 3.
[9] II, 33. 9–11. [10] II, 33. 10. [11] VII, 47. 1.
[12] II, 33. 3; for the above description, see Macdonell, VM., pp. 62, 58, 59, 74, 75.

have known as a distinct conception a thunder-god gigantic in size, a mighty eater and drinker, who slays the dragon with his lightning'.[1] Oldenberg bases this conclusion on the similarity of the Vedic *Vṛtrahan* (a characteristic epithet of Indra, the slayer of Vṛtra), Av. *Verethraghna* and the Armenian *Vahaken*,[2] the 'Dragon-slayer'.[3] This, however, cannot at present be regarded as anything more than a conjecture.

The relationship between the god of the sky and the god of the thunderstorm, as found in the mythologies of the various I.E. families, reveals interesting points. On the one hand, we find that in the north of Europe as in India the two gods are kept distinctly apart, as for example, in the *Ṛigveda* Dyaus the god of heaven and Indra the god of the thunderstorm;[4] while, on the other hand, the Greeks and the Romans have united the functions of the thunder-god with the sky-god, Zeus and Jupiter.[5] Thus, the Zeus of Homer is both a 'far-eyed sky' (*ευρύοπα*) and a 'cloud-gatherer' (*νεφεληγερέτης*) who 'rejoices in lightning' or 'twists the lightning' (*τερπικέραυνος*).[6] In contrast to the above Greek and Roman gods, we find that the Lithuanian Perkúnas, instead of being united with the sky-god, himself absorbs the functions of Zeus and thus becomes the chief god of the Lithuanians,[7] a fact which incidentally contradicts, to a certain extent, Schröder's conclusion that Dyaus was the greatest god of the I.E.s. This process of assimilation or identification is, however, not entirely absent even in Indian mythology. In the *Ṛigveda* where he is the son of Dyaus,[8] Parjánya is also called 'Father Asura',[9] while later he is

1 op. cit., p. 66; Oldenberg, RV., pp. 34, n. 1, and 134.

2 This is the spelling found in Oldenberg, op. cit.; Bloomfield (RV., p. 176) spells it as *Vahagn*; cf. also Hillebrandt, VM., III., pp. 188ff.

3 Oldenberg, RV., p. 134.

4 Schrader, AR., pp. 33b-34a.

5 Wilke, RI., p. 113.

6 Bloomfield, RV., pp. 111-12; Schrader, AR., p. 34.

7 Bloomfield, RV., p. 112.

8 VII, 102. 1. 9 V, 83. 6.

said to be the husband of the earth[1] and thus directly identified with Dyaus.[2]

Similar myths with regard to the origin of the thunderstorm are found among the I.E. peoples, and among them two ideas prominently appear. According to one, a heavenly being slays a dragon or a demon concealed in the cloud and, thus breaking open the obstructing enclosures, makes the heavenly water flow over the earth. This is found in the myth of the fight of Indra with Vṛtra[3] in the *Ṛigveda*, of Tištrya with Apaoša in the *Avesta*, of Donar with the wolf Fenris and of Apollo with the python.[4] The other idea is that a god delivers from a monster the cows of the clouds who are imprisoned in the mountain gorge, and this is found in the myths of Indra and Viśvarūpa, Herakles and Ceryones, Hercules and Cacus.[5]

### (*e*) *The Sun*, (*f*) *the Moon, and* (*g*) *the Dawn*

We have here the following equations:

**The Sun**: Sk. *súvar* (*sūŕya* and *svár*, Av. *hvar*), Gk. *ἀβέλιος* (Cret. *Hes*) *ἠέλιος*, *ἥλιος*, Lat. *sol*, Goth. *sauil*, neut. (beside *sunnô*, fem.), Welsh *heul*, Old Pruss. *saulé*, Lith. *sáulė*, Sl. *solnze*.[6]

**The Moon**: Sk. *mās*, Av. *māh*, Gk. *μήνη*, Goth. *mêna*, Lith. *ménů* (in addition O. Lat. *losna*, Lat. *lûna*, Armen. *lusin*).[7] The former of these may very probably be derived from *mā* 'to measure', thus showing that the first idea connected with the moon may have been as the measurer of time.[8]

[1] AV., XII, 1. 12, 42. *Vajasaneyi Samhita*, XVIII, 55f.

[2] Wilke, RI., p. 111; Bloomfield, RV., p. 112; see also Hirt, *Indogermanen*, p. 506; Schrader, AR., pp. 531–34; 416–9; etc.

[3] e.g. RV., I, 32.

[4] Schrader, AR., p. 39[b].

[5] ibid.; Carnoy, IE., p. 192; see also Schrader, *Die Indogermanen*, pp. 107–9, and Carnoy, op. cit., pp. 164–6 and 190ff.

[6] Schrader, AR., p. 34[a]; Feist, *Kultur*, pp. 344-5; Wilke, RI., p. 128.

[7] Schrader, ibid., and *Reallexikon*, s.vv. *Mond, Monat*.

[8] ibid., p. 547.

**The Dawn**: Sk. *uṣas* and *usrā*, Av. *ušah*, Gk. *ἠως*, Aeol. *αὔως*, Lat. *aurora*, Lith. *auszrá*; probably from the root *awes* 'to shine'.[1]

'All these and the related phenomena of the sky connected with light', remarks Schrader,[2] 'play an exceptionally important part in the Prusso-Lithuanian religion and mythology'; and there is evidence to show that the sun and the moon were the objects of worship among the tribes on the shores of the Baltic, the Persians and the Teutons.[3]

The cult of the sun is indeed very ancient and is practically universal, as it is to be found among practically all peoples, not excepting the I.E.s. But a difference between the sun-cult of non-I.E. peoples on the one hand, and the I.E.s on the other, must be recognized. Among most other peoples the cult of the sun is thickly interwoven with magical practices of a rather complicated character, while the I.E. cult of the sun, so far as we can judge from the evidence of the *Ṛigveda*, appears to be of a much-nobler type and comparatively free from magical or other inferior traits.[4]

In Vedic, as well as Greek mythology the sun drives through the sky in a car drawn by winged horses. In the *Ṛigveda* Sūrya's car is said to be drawn by seven steeds. He is said to measure the days and also to prolong the days of life.[5] Dispelling darkness with his light[6] he shines for men and gods over the whole world,[7] and, far-seeing spy[8] of the whole world,[9] he beholds the bad as well as the good deeds of mortals.[10] The dawn is sometimes said to produce Sūrya,[11] but in other places is spoken of as his wife.[12] He is

[1] Schrader, AR., p. 34[a]; Feist, *Kultur*, pp. 345 and 261; Schrader, p. 559.
[2] ibid.
[3] Grimm remarks about the Teutons: 'That to our remote ancestry the heavenly bodies, especially the sun and moon, were divine beings will not admit of any doubt.'—TM., II, p. 704.
[4] e.g. among the American Indians and the Mexicans (GB., I, pp. 311–15). See also ERE., XII, p. 62[b]. The Maori hero Maui is believed to have tamed the sun and thus made him go slower, and the Incas have a sun totem: (ibid.)
[5] I, 50. 7–9. [6] X, 37. 4.
[7] I, 50. 5; VII, 63. 1; VIII, 48. 7. [8] VII, 35. 8.
[9] IV, 13. 3. [10] I, 50. 7. [11] VII, 80. 2; 78. 3. [12] VII, 75. 5.

also called the god-born whose father is Dyaus[1] (or whom the gods raised from the depth of the ocean).[2] He is indeed the great *Āditya*,[3] the son of Aditi, a name which in later Sanskrit becomes equivalent to the sun.

The worship of the sun is also found among the Romans, the Slavs, the Lithuanians, and the Germans as well as the Celts and the Iranians.[4] Some at least of the above-mentioned ideas of sun-worship in India undoubtedly go back to the common Indo-Iranian period. That the Iranians worshipped the sun has been pointed out by Herodotus (I, 131), Xenophon (*Kyrop*, 8, 3, 12), and Curtius (3. 3. 7). We also find the sun invoked with the name *hvar*, and since the epithet *aurvataspa* (of swift steeds) is often applied to him, the notion of the sun driving in a car drawn by horses appears to be Indo-Iranian.[5]

The sun is also often conceived as the 'vigilant and relentless eye of the god of heaven'.[6] This conception, very prevalent in the *Ṛigveda*, is also found among the Iranians and is not unknown to the Greeks and the Germans.[7] He is often compared to a bird also, e.g. Garuḍa in the *Ṛigveda*.[8]

How[9] the sun, who is every day observed to set in the west, should again rise in the east, was one of the great riddles which primitive men could not solve. They had, indeed, proposed various explanations of it according to their ability, the simplest of which was that the sun which once sets never returns again and the one that appears on the horizon the next morning is a new one altogether. This belief, Wilke observes, was very widespread, being found among the I.E.s as well as among other peoples. It was also thought that the sun goes back either across the earth or through some subterranean canals.[10] Traces of this belief

[1] X, 37. 1. [2] X, 72. 7.
[3] I, 50. 12; VIII, 90. 11. [4] cf. Wilke, RI., pp. 130-4.
[5] ibid., p. 130; Carnoy, IE., p. 182.
[6] '*L'oeil vigilant et impitoyable du dieu du ciel*,' ibid., p. 181.
[7] ibid. [8] ibid.
[9] For the whole paragraph, see Wilke, RI.
[10] Fallaize, 'Sun, Moon and Stars (Primitive)', ERE., XII, p. 63a.

are found among the I.E.s, the Mexicans, and the Egyptians as well as the Australian Bushmen. Sometimes the sun is said to return through the mythical ocean that surrounds the earth, with which is probably connected the notion of identifying the sun with some aquatic animal such as a fish or a swan.

The relationship between the sun and the moon was very often speculated upon by primitives. They observed that the sun and the moon were sometimes near each other but sometimes far away; and again, sometimes only one appeared, while the other was altogether absent. This they explained by love or hate.[1] Among the I.E. peoples the notion of regarding the sun and the moon as of opposite sexes is probably very old. For we find that in German, Anglo-Saxon, and Lithuanian, the word for 'sun' is feminine, while the word for 'moon' is masculine, but in Greek and Latin the case is reversed. In Sanskrit, however, both words are on the whole masculine,[2] but Sun and Moon are also imagined to be brother and sister.[3] When they are conceived as of opposite sexes, the one is imagined to be the lover who eternally pursues the other as his fiancée. The notion of pursuit is present even when they are believed to be brother and sister.[4]

In the Lettish sun-myths, the sun is married to the moon, but the latter is an unfaithful husband.

It happened in the springtime
That sun and moon did wed,
But the sun rose up early
And from her the moon fled.

[1] Wilke, RI., p. 127.

[2] Grimm, TM., II, p. 703; Toy, *Intr. to the Hist. of Religions*, p. 139.

[3] Tylor, PC., 1920; cf. also Fraser, GB., III, pp. 71ff. and ERE., XII, p. 62b, I, 288f; Grimm, op. cit., for mythical marriage of sun and moon.

[4] Tylor, PC., 6th ed., I, p. 289; Grimm, TM., II, p. 703; 'sun and moon have concluded a marriage with each other as is related in Lithuanian and Lettic poems and more fully in a celebrated hymn of the *Ṛigveda*.'—Schrader, ERE., II, p. 39b

The morning star was loved then
By the lone wandering moon,
Who with a sword was smitten
In deep wrath by Perkun.[1]

The eclipse of the sun or moon must have attracted the particular attention of the primitives from the earliest time, and in attempting to explain this curious phenomenon, they might have associated it with the happening of a terrible catastrophe in the near future, probably 'a destruction of all things' or 'the end of the world'.[2] The eclipse may have been imagined to happen because the sun or the moon was being devoured by a 'demon' or a monster, a belief universal in the early stages of culture. There might have been as a result of this many current beliefs and practices;[3] but we cannot say much for certain.

Along with the sun-cult, the cult of the moon is also widespread and is found among the Persians, the Germans, the Indians, the Greeks and the Romans. Wilke[4] deals with this divinity at great length, and finds in it '*einer lebengebenden befruchtenden, und einer lebennehmenden, einer Todesgottheit*', of the united I.E. period, like the mother earth.[5] It is probable that the moon was deified and worshipped in the I.E. period as other natural phenomena, but she does not appear to have been a special object of worship. It is true, she is often mentioned with the sun in the *Ṛigveda* and intimately connected with the great Vedic god Soma, a word which in later Sanskrit becomes equivalent to the moon, but this[6] does not justify the conclusion that she had attained to the position of a special deity of any importance, either in the pre-Vedic or in the Vedic period. As we shall see later, she plays an

[1] Enid Walsford, ERE., XII, p. 102[b]. See also W. Mannhardt, '*Die lett. Sonnenmythen*,' ZE., VII, pp. 91ff. [2] Grimm, op. cit., p. 706.
[3] ERE., XII, p. 63[b]. [4] RI., pp. 145–189.
[5] ibid., p. 145; see also Tylor, PC., 6th ed., I, pp. 354-5.
[6] The word *indu* 'a drop', a constant epithet of Soma, also became equivalent to the moon in classical Sanskrit; cf. Macdonell, VR., p. 606[a].

exceptionally important part in Vedic mythology and her association with Soma may more properly be regarded as due to this sphere of her activity than any other.

Like the sun, the moon as well as the stars was regarded as possessing a human or quasi-human personality. From her swift motion through the sky, she was believed to possess an animal or a human form and her motion was attributed to her driving in a three-wheeled car or as going in a boat. The three-wheeled car of the moon-god is found in the *Viṣnu-Purāṇa*, as well as in Greek mythology. In Medea and in Germany also the moon is believed to drive through the air in a car; while elsewhere she is imagined to be travelling in a golden boat on the sea.[1]

The connexion between the intoxicating *soma* drink of the gods, on which is based the conception of the god Soma, and the moon, as well as the Indian and Mexican notion that the moon is the source of nectar, Wilke tries to explain by the belief that, there being a drinking-horn or a cup in the moon, she was the source of the divine intoxicant (*Behälter des himmlischen Götter und Rauschtrankes*); or by the belief that there is in the moon a man with a bucket,[2] who empties it when he is signalled by his friend the wind-spirit, and thus sends down the rain.

The importance of the sun, the moon, and the dawn, as well as the stars, in primitive times does not consist in the degree to which they were worshipped as gods, but in the mythological stories that are connected with them. The phenomenon of the eclipse, the waning and waxing of the moon, the rising and setting of the sun, the different positions of the sun in the sky, the spots on the moon, attracted attention very early; and the great number of myths that are found in relation to these are nothing but primitive

[1] Wilke, op. cit., p. 147; cf. what Grimm says about the Teutons: 'the sun has his chariot while the moon, as far as I know, has none ascribed to her,'—TM., II, p. 737.

[2] op. cit., pp 152-3. 'To this day the Swedish people see in the spots of the moon two persons carrying a big bucket on a pole.'—Grimm, op. cit., p. 717.

guesses at explaining as best as they could the various occurrences in nature.

From the fact that the behaviour of the moon appears more mysterious than that of the sun, the dawn or the stars, as, for example a partial eclipse is more clearly observed in the moon than in the sun, the moon had much greater influence on mythological stories and superstitious notions and observances, than even the sun.[1]

The eclipse, 'the embodiment of miraculous disaster,'[2] was explained as the devouring of the sun or the moon by a demon. This is found among many peoples and especially those of India today.[3] In Europe, however, the popular idea was 'either of a fight of sun or moon with celestial enemies, or of the moon's fainting or sickness'; and 'tumultuous clamour' was raised 'in defence or encouragement of the afflicted luminary'.[4]

Since the moon was the oldest measure of time, her changing phases were believed to have a commanding influence on human actions. The full moon could not have failed to gladden the hearts of men in the most savage conditions of life, but they had at the same time observed that from that night onward the moon was on the wane, while from the night of the new moon she waxed greater and greater. Believing that these phases of the moon had similar influence on the fortunes of men, the new moon was believed to be an auspicious time for the commencement of any important undertaking, such as marriage, house-building, counting of money, or cutting of hair and nails; while at the full moon were to be performed operations involving severence or dissolution, cutting down or levelling, as for example the dissolution of marriage, the pulling down of a house, etc.[5]

In west Africa, where moon-worship is very prevalent, it is said that 'at the appearance of every new moon, these

[1] ibid., p. 720.
[2] Tylor, PC., 6th ed., I, p. 328.
[3] op. cit., p. 331f. See also ERE., XII, pp. 63[b] and 103[b].
[4] op. cit., p. 333.
[5] Grimm, TM., II, pp. 708–16.

people fall on their knees, or else cry out standing and clapping their hands, "so may I renew my life as thou art renewed"; '[1] while the following prayers are mentioned by Grimm[2] as current among the Teutons:

'As thou decreasest, let my pain decrease.
May what I see, increase, and what I suffer cease.'

Grimm[3] also remarks that 'the observation of the lunar changes must in many ways have influenced the sacrifices, the casting of lots and the conduct of war'.

The spots or 'shady depressions' on the disc of the moon have also 'given rise to grotesque but similar myths in several nations'.[4] Some see in it a man, while others an animal. The animals that are frequently believed to inhabit the moon are the hare and the toad, the former being found among the Indians (*śaśa* = 'a hare', whence the moon is called *śaśin*, 'one bearing a hare'), the Greeks, the Romans, the Russians, the Lithuanians, as well as the people of South Africa, Mexico, north California, Tibet, China, and Japan.[5] Among those nations which believe that there is a man in the moon we have the Old Norse fable which says that the moon is the bearer of children; according to the Scandinavian legend the man in the moon is a wood-stealer, while, according to the English tradition, the 'song upon the man in the moon' runs as follows:

'Mon in the mone stond and strit (standeth and strideth),
*on his bot forke is burthen he bereth;*
hit is muche wonder that he na doun slyt (slideth),
for doutlesse he valle, he shoddreth and shereth,
when the forst freseth much chele he byd (chill he bideth),
the *thornes* beth kene, is hatten *to-tereth.*'[6]

The Mantras believe the dark spots on the moon to be a tree, while the Malays think it is a banyan tree.[7]

[1] Lubbock, Sir J., *Origin of Civilization*, 1912, p 272. [2] TM., II, p. 715.
[3] op. cit. [4] ibid., p. 716. [5] Wilke, RI., p. 154, and ERE., XII, p. 63.
[6] Grimm, TM., II, p. 718. [7] ERE., XII, p. 63[b].

### (*g*) *The Dawn*

The deification of the phenomenon of the dawn is found among all the separate I.E. peoples and, as we have already seen, a common name is also found; but in the I.E. period this deification must have been very indefinite and elementary. For, excepting the Vedic goddess of dawn in whom the Vedic poet personifies dawns in general, this goddess, in practically all the other I.E. branches, is a deity which denotes merely the sunrise which heralds the beginning of the Spring or the dawn which commences the Spring; (*die am Frühlingsanfang neuaufgehende Sonne oder vielmehr die erste Morgenrote des neuen Frühlings*).[1]

Thus it is natural to conclude that *Uṣas* of the *Ṛigveda*, the most beautiful poetical creation of the Vedic age, is a special Indian development, and that very little of it, if anything at all, goes back to the united I.E. period. Upon this conclusion there is almost complete unanimity among scholars,[2] the opinion having been definitely expressed by Macdonell, Schröder, and Wilke.

### (*h*) *The Stars*

'From savagery up to civilization, there may be traced in the mythology of the stars a course of thought, changed indeed in application, yet never broken in its evident connexion from first to last. The savage sees individual stars as animate beings, or combines star-groups into living celestial creatures, or limbs of them, or objects connected with them.'[3] Thus not only the sun and the moon mentioned above, but the stars in general also may have been deified and there may have existed abundant lore and legends about them. We have here the following philological equation:

[1] Wilke, RI., p. 143; see also Carnoy, IE., pp. 185-6.
[2] Schröder, AR., p. 17; Wilke, RI., p. 143; Macdonell, VM., p. 8.
[3] Tylor, PC., 6th ed., pp. 356-7.

Sk. *stár*, Av. *star*, Armen. *astλ*, Gk. *ἀσγήρ*, *ἄστρον*, Lat. *stella*, Kymr. *seren*, Corn. *steren*, Brit. *sterenn*, Goth. *stairnô*, O. N. *stjarna*, O.H.G. *sterno*. We also find, with *t* instead of *st* in Sk. and Gk., Sk. *taras*, Gk. *τέρας*.[1]

But what sorts of beings these stars were believed to be, and whether any of them were worshipped, we have no means of knowing. It does not appear probable that the planets were named in that remote period.[2] Still it is probable that they were regarded as the sons of the sun and the moon and also as divine or semi-divine.

In the Lettish songs the stars are said to be the children of the sun and the moon, and are called orphans because they appear only at night after their mother, the sun, has abandoned them.[3] This belief of their being regarded as the children of the sun and moon is found among many peoples.[4] Deification of individual stars could not have gone very far, but if the Aśvins and the Dioskouroi originally represented two stars, this deification may go back to the I.E. period.

### (*i*) *The Day and Night*

We have the following equations for the day and night:

**Day**: Sk. *divā* 'by day', *dyávi*, *dive-dive*, 'day by day', Armen. *tiv*, Lat. *dies*, Ir. *dia* (*in-diu* 'today'); later: Sk. *dina* 'day', Lit. (*nûn*)-*dinum*, *peren-dinum*, 'tomorrow', Goth. *sin-teins*, 'daily', O.Sl. *dĭnĭ*, Lith. *dienà*, O. Pruss. *deinâ*; words which are all derived from the roots *div* and *di*, 'to shine',[5] e.g. in Sk. *dideti*, 'appears'.

**Night**: Goth. *nahts*, O.H.G. *naht*, A.S. *niht*, O.N. *nôtt* (*fornâtt*), Lat. *nox*, *noctis*, Gk. *νύξ νυκτός*, Lith. *naktis*, Lett. *nakts*, O.Sl. *noshti*, Serv. *notj*, Sk. *nakta*, chiefly in compounds; the derivation of the words is however uncertain.[6]

1 Schrader, s.v. *Sterne*.
2 See below under *Aśvins*.
3 ERE., XII, p. 102[a].
4 ERE., XII, pp. 67[a] and 63[b].
5 Schrader, s.v. *Tag*; Feist, *Kultur*, p. 260.
6 Grimm, TM., II, p. 736; Schrader, s.v. *Nacht*; Feist, loc. cit.; see also Hirt, *Indogermanen*, pp. 540 and 748.

From the roots of the words for 'day' it is clear that the notion of the day, heaven, and god, are closely connected and although it would have been natural to think otherwise, the day is conceived of as a thing independent of the sun, and the night, independent of the moon. Grimm, after stating that 'day and night were holy, godlike beings near akin to the gods', remarks that 'probably the car of day was supposed to run before that of the sun, and the moon to follow night' and adds that 'the alternation of sexes between the sun and the moon on the one hand and the day and night on the other seems not without significance, the masculine day being accompanied by the feminine sun, the feminine night by the masculine moon'.[1]

The Edda myth makes day the child of night and says that 'All-father took *Night* and her son *Day*, set them in the sky, and gave to each of them a horse and a car, wherewith to journey round the earth in measured time'.[2] In the *Ṛigveda*, there is no hymn addressed to either Dyaus the god of Heaven or the day, probably because the relation between the day and the sun was clearly conceived. There is, however, a fine hymn addressed to night (*rātrī*). The poet prays the goddess, heaven's daughter, to accept his hymn which he has brought up like kine.

So, goddess, come today to us:
At thy approach we seek our homes,
As birds their nests upon the tree.
The villagers are gone to rest
And footed beasts and winged birds;
The hungry hawk himself is still.
Ward off from us she-wolf and wolf,
Ward off the robber, goddess Night:
So take us safe across the gloom.[3]

[1] Grimm, op. cit., pp. 735–7.

[2] op. cit., p. 735. Clarke, 'Teutonic Religion,' ERE., XII, pp. 252[b] and 101[b].

[3] X, 127, 4–6; Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 41.

Still it does not seem likely that the deification of either the day or night was much advanced in the I.E. period proper.

### (*j*) *The Aśvins*

That the Vedic twin gods called the *Aśvins*, 'Lords of steeds', belong to the Indo-Iranian period seems almost certain; while striking resemblances in character though not in nomenclature between the Vedic Aśvins, the Greek Dioskouroi (*Διόσκοῦροι*) and the Lettic God-sons, which cannot be regarded as purely accidental or 'developmental coincidences',[1] make it probable that they date from the I.E. period.[2]

First, they are all twin deities.[3]

Secondly, they are all represented as horsemen.[4]

Thirdly, each pair of these gods has a sister or a common sweetheart. Helen is the sister of Dioskouroi, the dawn is the sister of the Vedic Aśvins, while they have also a common sweetheart in Sūryā ('sun-maiden') the daughter of the

[1] Griswold, RV., p. 256. [2] Macdonell, VM., p. 54.

[3] Hopkins, RI., p. 80. 'The Dioscuri were placed as twin stars in the heavens.'—Griswold, RV., p. 258, n. 3.

'The morning and the evening stars play an important part in the folksongs, sometimes as a single being, sometimes in dual form. In Lithuanian sources they are called Auszrine and Wakarine and are described as the handmaids of the sun.

'Dear sun, daughter of God
Who kindles your fire in the morning?
Who spreads your bed in the evening?
Auszrine kindles the fire.
Wakarine spreads the bed.'—ERE., XII, p. 102[b].

According to Dr. Farnell the Lettish sons of God are never called Twins.—*Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality*, Oxford, 1921, p. 178; see the whole of ch. VIII. Dr. Farnell rejects the theory that these twin gods go back to the I.E. period.

[4] Griswold, RV., p. 256; Macdonell, VM., p. 53.

The Lettish sons of God are also connected with horses:

'Hither rode the dear sons of God
With steeds dripping with sweat.'
'Folks say the moon has no steeds of his own.
The morning star and the evening star
They are the steeds of the moon.'—ERE., XII, p. 102[b].

Sun (Sūrya), who married them of her own accord; and the Lettic gods marry the daughter of the sun.[1]

Fourthly, they are all sons of Dyaus.[2]

Fifthly, the Aśvins are the helpers in need, the divine healers, and so are the Dioskouroi who are for that reason called *Anaktes*, 'protecting lords'.[3] For these reasons it is generally held that the basic idea underlying these gods goes back to the I.E. times.[4]

In the Indo-Iranian period, so far as we can trace these twin-gods, we find a similarity in names but hardly any in character. Thus the name Nāsatya, by which the Vedic Aśvins are often designated, is found in the Boghaz-köi tablets (about 1400 B.C.).[5] They occur there with Mitra, Varuṇa and Indra. The name is almost identical in form, and since the original words can be rendered by the phrase 'gods Nāsatya' they appear to have been more than one. Beyond this we get no information from the Boghaz-köi inscription; but we derive an important hint from the form in which the word Nāsatya occurs there. The original *s*, which we find everywhere in the Iranian languages

[1] Griswold, RV., pp. 256 and 259, n. 4; Hopkins, RI., p. 78.

'Wooing of the daughter of the sun by the son of God is a favourite theme of Lettish folk-songs:

'Why are grey steeds standing
By the house-door of the sun?
They are the grey steeds of the son of God
Who woos the daughter of the sun.
The son of God stretches out his hand
Over the great water
To the daughter of the sun.'—ERE., XII, p. 130[a].

The sky itself is described as a 'great water' or a mountain:

'The sun with two gold horses
Rides up the rocky mountains,
Never heated, never weary,
Never resting on the way.'—ERE., XII, p. 102[b].

[2] Hopkins, RI., p. 80; '*Διός-κοῦροι=dio-napātā*'.—Bloomfield, RV., p. 112.

[3] ibid., p. 53; for a description of the Lettic gods, see ERE., pp. 102[a-3b].

[4] See Oldenberg, RV., p. 213; Macdonell, VM., p. 53f.; Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 379f.; Bloomfield, RV., pp. 113ff., Hopkins, RI., pp. 78, 80; Griswold, RV., p. 256; Schrader, AR., p. 39.

[5] Griswold, RV., p. 256; CHI., I, p. 72.

replaced by *h*, has not changed into *h*. This indicates that the name Nāsatya is certainly pre-Iranian or Indo-Iranian. Secondly, we find the name Nāonhaithya in the *Avesta*. However, this Nāonhaithya is not here a god but a demon, very likely nothing but a 'degraded representative of the earlier Nāsatya'.[1]

Thus we have a curious situation. The Aśvin-myth appears to have existed in the I.E. period and continued to exist among the Greeks, the Letts, the Indo-Aryans and probably also the Teutons, with a great deal of consistency, they being everywhere represented as the 'healers' or the 'savers'; and in the Indo-Iranian period they acquired a common name. But while the Vedic Aśvins as well as their Greek and Lettic representatives retained their chief original characteristics, in the Iranian religion alone Nāsatya became a demon. Although it is very difficult to explain it, this sort of change in character of gods found in the Indian and Iranian religions is quite common. Thus Indra, the warrior, success-bestowing god of the Vedic Indians, as well as the moral ruler Varuṇa, both become demons in the *Avesta*, and Gautama Buddha a heretic.[2] That these gods represented some phenomenon of nature is undoubted, but which particular one is a matter of dispute. Macdonell, after reviewing the various theories about their origin, remarks that 'the twilight and the morning star theories seem the most probable'.[3]

### (*k*) *Fire*

From the equation Sk. *agni*, Lith. *ugnis*, Lat. *ignis*, O.Sl. *ogni*, Russ. *OMOHb*, Wilke concludes that '*zweifellos würden in der Einheitsperiode des indogermanischen Urvolks auch bestimmte Feuergötter verehrt*'. Whether fire was an actual deity or not, its importance for human existence in

[1] Griswold, RV., p. 256.

[2] Moulton, EZ., p. 115. See also Muir, V, pp. 234–57.

[3] VM., pp. 53-4; see also Griswold, RV., pp. 256-9; ERE., XII, pp. 102b–103a; most of the theories are discussed *infra*, ch. IX.

those days when the I.E. tribes undoubtedly lived in a cold climate must have been recognized and consequently deified as a higher power. We shall see later that the use of fire for sacrifices was probably unknown in the united I.E. period. Thus the most important function of fire, namely that of carrying gifts to the dead ancestors and the gods through its flames or smoke, found everywhere among the separate I.E. peoples, is a later development which received a particular prominence among the Indo-Iranians. So far as it was regarded as an object of worship, it is mentioned by Herodotus and Caesar; and among the Prusso-Lithuanians, declares Schrader, 'it was an object of a sumptuous worship'.[1] There is also a Lithuanian goddess of the hearth, Aspelenie, 'the one behind the hearth' (Lith. *pelene*). Comparing this cult of fire as fed by priests in the north, with the southern cult of the Roman Vesta, Greek *ἑστίη*, Arcadian *Fιστία*, 'hearth,' 'hearth-fire,' Schrader finds a number of common usages connected with this cult and therefore regards it as going back 'to the remotest antiquity'.[2] He finds a further proof of his position in 'the fact that, according to Herodotus,[3] among the Scythians '*Ιστιη*' (Scyth. *ταβιτί* i.e. "the warming one," or "heat"; Av. *tap*, Sk. *tápati tāpayati, taptá*; New Pers. *tābad, tafsad*; Lat. *tepesco*) was a most sacred, in fact the most highly honoured goddess'; and he thinks it to be beyond doubt 'that the worship of the single hearth fire, as well as of the common perennial fire, belongs to the most ancient religious ideas and cults of the Aryans (i.e. I.E.s).'

In the *Ṛigveda*, Agni the god of fire is one of the most prominent and exalted, being the divine messenger who goes between the heaven and the earth, the wise priest of mankind. In this connexion Professor Macdonell[4] truly remarks that 'though *agni* is an I.E. word, the worship of fire under this name is purely Indian'.

[1] AR., p. 34[b].
[2] ibid., p. 35[a].
[3] iv. 59.
[4] Macdonell, VM., p. 99.

Speculations as to the origin of fire are also an important source of myths among the different I.E. peoples, and some of the ideas may go back to the I.E. period. The custom of obtaining fire by rubbing two sticks of hard wood is found among the Indians, the Greeks, the Romans, the Slavs, the Teutons and partially among the Lithuanians also.[1] For this reason Agni is called in the *Ṛigveda*, the 'son of the forest' or the 'embryo of the plants'. He is also called *Apām napāt*, the 'son of waters', a name which appears to be Indo-Iranian. This notion of fire being the son of waters is probably due to the occurrence of the phenomenon of lightning (the celestial form of fire), while it is raining.

### (*l*) *Wind, Water and Lightning*

It is improbable that in the I.E. period, these powers had received any definite deification. Although the furious wind of the storm, water associated with rain, and rivers and springs as well as lightning may have made an impression on the human mind as powerful phenomena, they were probably all of them conceived as inseparable from the thunderstorm and the formation of gods based on these phenomena is probably late. We have however, the following equations for wind: Sk. *vāta* = Lat. *ventus*, Goth. *winds*; Sk. *vāyu* = *Lith. wējas*, Gk. *αἴολος*; and the roots Sk. *vā*, 'to blow,' Gk. *ἄημι*, O.Sl. *vějati*, Goth. *waian*.[2]

Wind appears as a god in the Lithuanian *Wejo-patis*, 'lord of the wind', and Schrader in opposition to Usener-Solmsen regards the names of gods ending in *-patis* as very old since the Lith. *pats*, 'husband', has preserved the old meaning 'lord', 'master' only in one case besides these names of gods, viz. in the old compound word *wiĕszpatis*, 'God', lit. 'lord of the tribe'.[3]

1 Schrader, AR., p. 39b; Carnoy, IE., p. 202.

2 Schrader, pp. 956, 674-5; AR., p. 35a.

3 Schrader, loc. cit., and note.

The occurrence of the names Brhaspati and Brahmanaspati in the oldest as the newest portions of the *Ṛigveda*, to a certain extent supports

The Teutonic word *Wodin, odinn* is often compared with the Vedic *Vāta* and *Vāyu* but their etymological connexion is extremely doubtful.[1]

The worship of water, in the form of springs and rivers, is widespread among the different I.E. peoples, and a common element (Sk. *ap*=water) is found in a certain number of words. Lat. *Neptûnus, nepitu, 'inundatio'*, Av. *napta* 'moist', *Νάπας*, a Persian spring, *Νάπαρις*, a Scythian river; the Greek *Νηρεύς, ναρός*, flowing', 'moist'; the Indian *Apsaras, apām napāt* 'the water-child'.[2]

### 6. *The Indo-European conception of God*

These powers of nature, which we have now enumerated, i.e. the sky (*dyêus*), together with the phenomena appearing in it or coming from it, 'the heavenly ones' (*deivôs*), is certainly 'the real kernel of the old I.E. religion'.[3] The I.E.s had keenly felt the influence of these powers and had found it necessary to propitiate them by prayers and sacrifices of a crude form. According to Schrader, this tendency to deify natural phenomena was due to the world-wide existence of animism.[4] It does not, however, appear probable that the worship of these powers was due so much to animism in the proper sense of the term, as to what is called animatism.[5] What the primitive I.E.s thought was that these natural powers were great conscious agents possessing human characteristics such as will and desire, but being of superhuman power, capable of helping or hindering men in their lives. And this accords well with the fact that the names of these 'heavenly ones' did not

Schrader's view; but still the opinion held by most scholars of Sanskrit that the names are comparatively late appears more probable.

[1] Schrader, op. cit.; *Reallexikon*, p. 675.

[2] Schrader, AR.; cf. Fay, PAOS., CLXXII.

[3] Schrader, AR., p. 35b. [4] op. cit., p. 32b.

[5] Animism in this connexion means attributing to an object (or phenomenon) the existence of a spirit as a separate entity distinguished from its material form.

mean anything beyond what they stood for in the actual experience of man.

Feist[1] indeed brings forward philological evidence to show that the I.E.s already distinguished between the body and the spirit, or the soul. But this does not by itself nor even when taken with the fact of the attention paid to dead ancestors necessarily prove the existence of animism. Because to distinguish the body from the spirit, or to regard the spirit of the dead man as continuing to exist after death, is one thing, and to attribute a spirit to everything, animate or inanimate, quite another. The above-mentioned two notions, existing from very ancient times, are undoubtedly very important factors in the growth of animistic beliefs, but they do not predicate an unequivocal existence of animism proper.

Animatism[2] thus preceded animism and was the first and the most elementary step in the process of personification, which was later the common basis on which the personal gods of the various separate I.E. peoples were based. It was due to this fundamental character and naturalness of animatism, which regarded superhuman phenomena on the analogy of human personality, that we find a surprising similarity in the development of gods of the different I.E. peoples, although very little of it belonged to a common period. Thus we find the different phenomena of nature regarded as gods, possessing similar spheres of influence, similar characteristics and objects of similar prayers and sacrifices.

Sir James Frazer in the first volume of *The Worship of Nature*,[3] takes no notice of what is known as animatism, and gives the following account of how a pantheon of the gods

[1] *Kultur*, p. 99.

[2] Definition of animatism: 'The doctrine that a great part if not the whole, of the inanimate kingdom, as well as all animated beings, are endowed with reason, intelligence and volition, identical with that of man cf. especially Marett, *Threshold of Religion*, p. 9.'—N. W. Thomas, art. 'Animism,' EB., II, p. 53[a].

[3] London, 1926.

and goddesses which were believed to govern the world, came into being:

'After men had peopled with a multitude of individual spirits every rock and hill, every tree and flower, every brook and river, every breeze that blew, and every cloud that flecked with silvery white the blue expanse of heaven, they began, in virtue of what we may call the economy of thought, to limit the number of the spiritual beings of whom their imagination at first had been so prodigal. Instead of a separate spirit for every individual tree, they came to conceive of a god of the woods in general....; instead of personifying all the winds as gods, each with his distinct character and features, they imagined a single god of the winds..... To put it otherwise, the innumerable multitude of spirits or demons was generalized and reduced to a comparatively small number of deities; animism was replaced by polytheism.'[1] This generalization, he adds, is due to 'the instinctive craving of the mind after simplification and unification of its ideas', which later reduces polytheism to monotheism.[2]

'The instinctive craving of the mind after simplification and unification of ideas' may be a psychological fact, and it may also be granted that the current opinion that animism is a very primitive form of belief, is correct. Yet the process by which Frazer holds the nature-gods and goddesses arose, is none the less improbable. The character of the majority of nature-gods found among the I.E.s, and which are described by Frazer himself, is such that there was no occasion for either the instinctive craving, the generalization or 'the economy of thought', unless of course this is based merely on the consideration that there were fewer but more impressive gods and goddesses than is assumed to have been the case in a preceding age. For neither the god of the sky, or the earth, or the sun, or the moon can with any stretch of imagination be regarded as a generalization

[1] op. cit., p. 9. [2] op. cit., pp. 9-10.

from 'the innumerable multitude of spirits or demons'[1] which were believed to inhabit the various skies, earths, suns and moons which do not exist. Nor is this less true with regard to the gods of fire, or wind, or water, or the goddesses of river and dawn. One cannot say with certainty that every lighted torch or kindled piece of wood, every gust of wind, every pool of water, every little streamlet, or the dawn of every day, must have been regarded as possessed of an individual spirit, before the conception of the gods and goddesses representing the different phenomena arose. Not only is this *prima facie* improbable, but there is no evidence to support it. The evidence collected by Frazer himself points to a different conclusion with a greater degree of plausibility. We will here examine only the evidence of the Vedic literature, which Frazer thinks supports his view. Just as formerly he had supported his contention that the age of religion was everywhere preceded by an age of magic, by quoting from the work of Oldenberg on the relation between magic and religion in the Vedic literature, he now quotes Macdonell on Vedic mythology to uphold the contention that animism is at the root of the nature-gods. What Oldenberg had said with regard to the place of magic in Vedic ritual was indeed in conformity with the hypothesis of Sir James Frazer, but it is doubtful whether Macdonell does in fact regard animism as the real foundation of the Vedic gods, as Frazer seems to assume.

Macdonell does not use the term animism, and the term animatism was unknown when he wrote his *Vedic Mythology*. Nor does he speak of spirits, demons or souls. His words are: 'The foundation on which Vedic mythology rests, is still the belief surviving from a remote antiquity, that all the objects and phenomena of nature with which man is surrounded, are animate and divine.'[2] It is only the

[1] cf. 'On the whole, however, it is probably the forest rather than the single tree which received first religious regard as a terrifying object.'—Hopkins, *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, 1923, p. 22. This suggests a somewhat reverse order than what is considered by Frazer to have been the case.

[2] *Vedic Mythology*, p. 2.

first part of this sentence which gives the impression that Macdonell may have meant animism, since at that time the theory of animism was at the height of its popularity. But on the other hand, regarding the objects and phenomena as animate (i.e. alive and not necessarily possessing an immaterial and detachable spirit) and divine, is equally true of animatism ; and then the remark ' everything that impressed the soul with awe or was regarded as capable of exercising a good or evil influence on man '[1] is more especially characteristic of animatism than of animism.[2]

But even if Macdonell holds what Frazer thinks he does, it appears to us that such a view is not supported by the evidence of the *Ṛigveda*. No god or goddess of the *Ṛigveda* can be shown to have been believed as simply a spirit or a soul residing in the phenomenon he or she represented. Nor is there any vestige of the alleged generalization from many spirits to few. In the *Ṛigveda* we have no god of fires but a fire-god (Agni), no god of winds but a wind-god (Vāyu, while the Maruts are the wind-gods), no god of rains but a rain-god (Parjanya), no god of thunders but a thunder-god (Indra), no goddess of rivers, but goddesses which were the personifications of particular streams (Sindhu, Sarasvatī). While on the other hand we have no god of stones, or of trees, or of stars, objects which it is easier to conceive as inhabited by separable spirits.[3]

[1] ibid. : see also Frazer, *The Worship of Nature*, I, pp. 20ff.

[2] cf. Marett, *Threshold of Religion*, pp. 14ff.

[3] It is not even true to say that wherever stones, trees, etc., are worshipped, it is the spirit believed to reside in them that is worshipped. This is quite clear from the practices current in all parts of India and elsewhere. Hopkins has stated the true position with regard to stone-worship in the following words: '....stones have been worshipped by Finns, Lapps, South Sea Islanders, Africans, Redskins, Peruvians, Greeks, Romans and other Aryans, Syrians, Dravidians, Egyptians and Chinese. At the present day the inhabitants of Kateri in south India worship a stone, which if neglected will turn into a wild ox....Food and drink are presented to stones today in Nigeria (as well as in the Central Provinces of India and Berar) to effect cures. There is in these no idea of a spirit in the stone ; it is the stone itself as being powerful and wilful which is worshipped.'—*Origin and Evolution of Religion*, 1923, p. 14 ; cf. the whole of chapter II.

The distinction between animism and animatism has been clearly brought out by Dr. Farnell in the following passage, where he observes the rare applicability of animism to Greek religion, an observation which in our opinion holds good of the religion of the various branches of the I.E. peoples:[1]

'. . . . Where we find a nature-object, wind, water, or thunder, revered as if endowed with a soul, we term this mental process animism, a term, however, only rarely applicable to the Greek phenomena apart from the worship of the dead, for instance, to the Attic cult of the Tritopatores, who appear to have been regarded partly as ancestral ghosts, partly as wind-powers; . . . . where we find the object worshipped in and for itself as sentient and animate, a thunderstorm, moving water, a blazing hearth, we should describe the religious consciousness as animatism rather than animism, which implies the definite conception of souls or spirits.'[2]

Sir James Frazer, along with Professor Macdonell, is perfectly right in saying that 'the worship of nature is based on the assumption that natural phenomena, whether animate or inanimate, are living personal beings analogous to man in their nature but far superior to him in power. In short, the worship of nature is based on the personification of nature'.[3] The only thing we dispute is that this personification was preceded by, nay, was actually the effect of the belief in spirits.

We may however assume with Schrader,[4] that the I.E.s from the earliest times possessed the capacity and the tendency to form into a divinity every conception in nature or in culture which was of significance for primitive men. In

[1] According to Dr. Marett, the originator of the term animatism, animatism is the attributing to the sacred and divine a living nature in which the body and its indwelling life are not distinguished; while in animism the body is subordinated to an independent animating principle.—*Threshold of Religion*, p. xxxii.

[2] Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion*, London, 1912, pp. 4-5.

[3] *The Worship of Nature*, I, p. 19; see also p. 18.

[4] Schrader, AR., p. 32a.

our opinion, however, the deification of nature alone was the most predominant form of belief during the I.E. period, and although the deification of other things may have existed during the preceding period, in the I.E. period itself it was of much less importance. As a result of the above capacity the I.E.s already possessed gods and worshipped them, but had not yet given them any names or epithets. 'They sacrificed to the sky, the sun, the moon, the dawn, fire, wind, and water; but the names indicating these powers still coincided perfectly with the respective designations.'[1]

This particular stage when the name of the thing is the name of the god is what Usener[2] calls the stage of 'special gods' (*Sondergötter*), and at this stage the province of a special god is limited to the sphere of activity indicated by his name. This, says Schrader,[3] is the oldest form of I.E. belief and Usener[4] bears witness to this by proving that this kind of belief existed in extensive parts of Europe. At this stage the degree of personification was incipient. But gradually through 'the capacity of annexing the sphere of activity of others' which these 'special gods' possessed,[5] the 'special gods' were personified more and more and so they gradually tended to become 'personal gods' and received 'true proper names'. This, according to Schrader, is the stage in which we find the gods as we learn about them from the written records preserved to us. They are here 'for the most part completed and finished'.[6]

The above explanation of Schrader is not however free from confusion, not to say apparent contradiction. When Schrader agrees with Usener that there is a stage in man's development at which he deifies everything in nature and culture that is of importance to early man, he criticizes and abandons the view of Kaussina, according to whom there

[1] ibid., p. 35b. [2] *Götternamen*, p. 75.
[3] *Spra. u. Urg.*, 1890, p. 600; AR., p. 35b.
[4] *Götternamen*, p. 277.
[5] Schrader, AR., p. 36a; see also Griswold, RV., p. 81.
[6] Schrader, AR., p. 36a.

are only three gods in Teutonic mythology. But assuming with Schrader that the Teutons along with the Romans and Lithuanians as proved by Usener, possessed a number of special or departmental gods, does he mean to say that this was an I.E. characteristic and that these departmental gods existed in that remote period? If so, how can their practically complete absence in the early Indian and Iranian mythologies be explained?[1] To our mind what Usener has described is applicable (if at all) only to the Roman and the Lithuanian special gods, and since their existence in any other branches of the I.E. peoples is not free from doubt, it cannot be regarded as an I.E. characteristic. The inconsistency of Schrader's position, however, appears when he attributes the formation of this endless variety of 'special gods' to the phenomenon of animism.[2] If a particular thing is deified because of its importance to primitive men, the spirit in the thing is not taken into account—if at all this stage of belief is assumed to have been reached. Animism pure and simple primarily leads to nothing else but fetishism, totemism and ghost-worship, and only secondarily

[1] Dr. Griswold's (RV., pp. 81ff.) ingenious attempt to find special or departmental gods in the *Ṛigveda* cannot be regarded as successful in the slightest degree. Properly speaking Indra is not 'he of the storm' but storm itself, Agni 'he of the fire' but fire itself, Uṣas 'she of the dawn' but dawn herself, Dyaus, 'he of the sky' but sky itself, etc.; and it appears quite absurd to speak of these gods in that way.

This absurdity is again clearly demonstrable in the case of Soma, Sindhu and Sarasvatī. The Soma of the *Ṛigveda* is not a departmental god supervising the plant world, but only the *soma* plant and its juice, and Sindhu and Sarasvatī are neither of them departmental deities of the rivers in general but personifications of particular streams which were regarded as divine.

In the *Avesta*, however, there do exist a number of departmental deities; but this is really an argument against the existence of departmental deities in the more primitive times rather than in favour of it, for the very simple reason that the *Avesta* is recognized to be much later in date than the *Ṛigveda*, where no 'departmental gods' can be found. Had it been an I.E. or even an I.I. characteristic, it is impossible to see how the *Ṛigveda* could have remained so immune from it. The more probable conclusion therefore is that the Avestan 'departmental gods' are purely Iranian creations.

[2] Schrader, AR., p. 32b.

to the formation of other gods. But the special gods are neither fetishes nor totems nor ghosts. When animism is the cause of the coming into existence of a deity, it is the impression made by the activity of the spirit resident in the object that brings about and compels the deification or worship of the thing, and whether the object is useful or not is immaterial.[1] If it makes a great impression, especially by striking terror or bringing good luck irrespective of its utility, it is turned into a divinity and worshipped. But the notion of a presiding deity, which is indeed at the root of the Roman and the Lithuanian 'special gods', is an abstraction from the material thing and is not identical with the conception of a spirit. It is indeed truly urged that animism, in the sense in which it is recognized by E. B. Tylor and his school, 'explains only the dead material of religion, viz. that material which concerns the human, the natural, the world of the dead, of animated nature, ancestor-worship and so on; that is, all that lies on this side of the gulf. What lies on the other side, cannot originate in animism and animism does not explain it.'[2]

In fact, as a general rule, the conception of departmental gods is a late development, and a tendency to divide the sphere of influence of the originally one god into separate parts, and then assigning a guardian deity to each one of them, appears more in accordance with facts.[3] Thus among the I.E.s we first have Dyeus, the god of the sky, who was the god of the sum total of the phenomena observed in the sky, the original conception, however powerful, being as yet too confused to have any definiteness about it. But soon man saw that the phenomena raging in the sky were not one but many. The sun, the moon, the thunderstorm, the lightning, the dawn, the wind, etc. were all quite

[1] This position is to a certain extent accepted by Professor Toy. He remarks: 'It is not probable that the departmental gods are always developed directly out of spirits.'—*Intr. to the Hist. of Religions*, 1913, p. 177.

[2] *Athenaeum*, 5 June 1909, as quoted by Sir W. Crooke in 'Hinduism', ERE., VI, p. 689b. See also p. 690a.

[3] See Carnoy, IE., pp. 216–8.

distinct from the sky and from each other. When these different phenomena were separated, it was found needful to invoke the aid of each of them separately. Thus, instead of the sky-god representing all the phenomena in one and therefore no one in particular—although he might have been most closely associated with the phenomenon of light—each one of the phenomena was formed into a separate god. The formation of these gods depended on nothing else but the capacity to separate one phenomenon from another, and the recognition of its peculiar importance to human welfare and existence. When agriculture became a very important profession, it was made to be supervised by a deity, and animals and instruments that were useful for agriculture were themselves worshipped, not as totems or fetishes, but as smaller deities in the field of agriculture. This is well illustrated by the worship of the bull and the agricultural implements very prevalent in India to the present day. The same happened to cattle-breeding among the Lithuanians. This is indeed a general human tendency and the correspondence among two or more branches of the I.E.s can be better explained on the principle of independent later development, than the gratuitous assumption of prehistoric antiquity.[1]

Numerous instances of departmental gods of undoubted later origin can be found in India. Some of the gods of the *Ṛigveda* later come to preside over a department of nature with which they had only a slight connexion originally. Thus, for example Varuṇa was in the *Ṛigveda* primarily a god of the sky, but later becomes the ocean-god ; the Vedic Savitṛ was not a proper sun-god but in the later mythology he is identical with Sūrya, and represents the heavenly luminary; Soma, the deified *soma* plant and juice of the *Ṛigveda*, becomes a regular moon-god, while Yama the mythical ancestor becomes the king of the nether world.[2] Sarasvatī a deified river becomes a goddess of learning, Indra the king of gods

[1] See Griswold, RV., p. 15.

[2] Jacobi, 'Brahmanism', ERE., II, pp. 802b–3a.

in heaven, etc. In the popular belief of the present day again, there are to be found in all parts of India gods and goddesses presiding over small-pox (*mātāmāya* in C.P. and Berar), cholera (*marāmāya*), snake-bite (*shipināthabowā*), etc.

In this way the process of the formation of the 'special gods' would be the reverse of what is said to have been the case by Schrader and Usener, according to whom there was first a great multitude of special gods, who later 'through their capacity of annexing the sphere of activity of other gods became personal gods', who consequently attained a high degree of personification. But the almost reverse process which has been suggested here, should not be taken to apply too logically so as to carry the formation of many gods to monotheism as its ultimate source.[1]

We have already seen, while considering the relation between I.E. magic and religion, that there are five philological equations from which we can learn something about the nature of the I.E. conception of god. From the first equation there given (viz. Sk. *deva* = Lat. *deus* = Lith. *diẽwas*, etc.) it appears that the oldest conception of god among the I.E.s had been associated with the phenomenon of heavenly light. 'The irreproachable etymology which connects *deivos*, the universal I.E. word for "god", with the verb *div, dyu*, "to shine", shows that the word came from the luminous manifestations of nature by day and night, and determines authoritatively the source from which the I.E.s derived their first and most pervasive conception of divine power'.[2] The very fact that the I.E. peoples had conceived the idea and felt the necessity of entering into relation with these heavenly powers indicates that they regarded them with awe and reverence and considered them as on the

1 Dr. Usener's theory has been very ably criticized and well-nigh refuted by Dr. L. R. Farnell, 'The Place of the "Sonder-Götter" in Greek Polytheism', in *Anthropological Essays presented to E. B. Tylor*, Oxford, 1907, pp. 81–100.

2 Bloomfield, RV., p. 108f.

whole beneficent; and this is borne witness to by the second equation, (viz. Sl. *bogŭ* = Av. *bagha* = Sk. *bhaga*, etc.).[1] This shows that the notion of the 'heavenly ones' being beneficent was formed very early and, at least among the old Slavs, it had become so predominant, that the general word for 'god' in their language is *bogŭ* and not *deivos*, i.e. the notion of the god being benevolent had superseded the earlier notion of the god being the source of heavenly light. In the Avestan also the word *bagha* is sometimes used as meaning 'a god' in general.[2] These considerations would again support the view of Professor Macdonell, who thinks that 'there is no reason to suppose that it (the word *bogŭ* = *bagha* = *bhaga*) designated any individual god in the I.E. period, for it cannot have attained a more specialized sense than merely bountiful "god", if indeed it meant more than merely bountiful giver'.[3] The idea of the bounteous and liberally giving gods is fully illustrated by the Vedic mythology, where they are without exception benevolent. But the term *bhaga* does not either in the *Ṛigveda* or in later Sanskrit literature attain to the position of a common name for 'god'. Here it is the word *deva* that is retained. The word *bhaga*, however, comes into prominence in the later literature as *bhagavān*, but so far as the I.E. religion is concerned this fact is not of much importance.

1 'The word is again of clear origin; it means "spender of goods or blessings". It contains the abstract conception of a good god, embodying an eternal and never slumbering wish of mankind.'—Bloomfield, RV., p. 109.

2 We have for instance *magišta bagānām* 'greatest of *bagas*'.—Bartholomae, AIW., p. 292; see also Carnoy, IE., p. 171.

3 VM., p. 45; cf. Bloomfield, RV., p. 109; Wilke, RI., p. 108.

CHAPTER VI

# INDO-EUROPEAN CULT AND PRIESTHOOD

## I. Cult

### 1. *Prayer and Sacrifice*

Whatever may be said about the detailed description of the powers and functions of the above mentioned natural phenomena, that they were deified and thought to be higher and more powerful than men, and exercising influence upon their earthly existence, is undoubted. The degree of influence which they exercised is, for want of philological or other evidence with regard to the forms of worship, extremely uncertain. The fact of the existence of belief or beliefs may be independently proved, but to know what kind of beliefs or of what intensity they were, we must look to the acts to which the mental state of belief gave rise. Judging from the evidence for the Indo-Iranian and the Vedic religions, it is very probable that the above mentioned gods were prayed to for protection from those phenomena they respectively stood for. But a common word for 'prayer' or the root 'to pray' in the I.E. languages is wanting. We have indeed a short equation Sk. *yaj* = Av. *yaz* and Gk. ἄξομαι, ἅγιος, ἁγός, 'to offer', 'to worship'.[1]

The Sk. *yaj* in the beginning might have meant 'to worship', i.e. a root including both the conceptions of praying as well as offering or sacrificing.[2] Thus it appears to us that the first form of worship of 'the heavenly ones' was by admitting their superior powers, which gradually developed into laudations later expressed in poetical hymns, and

[1] Schrader, 2nd ed., I, p. 134.

[2] With regard to the Av. *Yasna*, L. H. Mills remarks: 'The word Yasna means worship including sacrifice.'—SBE., XXXI, p. 195.

asking them to bestow some blessing upon the supplicants. In Schrader's opinion ideas of prayer and sacrifice as well as the priesthood originated in magical charms, practices and the magicians respectively. This we find it impossible to believe in, in spite of the fact that writers like Oldenberg, Macdonell, and others have tacitly assumed the truth of it. To our mind there are only two alternatives: either everything that goes to make religion was derived from magic (i.e. both the forms of belief as well as practices); or magic and religion are so fundamentally different attitudes of mind that, disregarding the question of mutual influence, they must have come into existence quite independently of each other. To maintain the former position, it must be proved not only that prayer and sacrifice are based upon magical charms and practices, but also that the very conception of god is based upon and actually derived from the belief in magical powers or spirits. But once it is admitted that the gods of religion originated independently of magic, as appears to have been done by all the above-mentioned authorities, we at once admit the difference in the mental attitudes which underlie the belief in religious gods and magical spirits. And when it is conceded that religion calls forth a very different attitude of mind, it is impossible to understand why the same different attitude of mind could not have given rise to the different modes of propitiation, viz. prayer and sacrifice, which are peculiar to religion, without their being evolved from charms and incantations.

That the idea of god is based on nothing else but the powers which magic appeals to, is not commonly held; at any rate, no effort has so far been made to establish this theory with regard to the I.E. peoples. We venture, therefore, to put forward the theory that at least among the I.E. tribes, prayer and sacrifice were developed independently of the corresponding magical practices, and priesthood independently of the magicians. We will proceed to a brief discussion of this position.

Otto Schrader in his article entitled 'Aryan Religion',[1] takes the more ancient character of magic and the magicians for granted and then traces the connexion between magical and religious practices on the one hand, and the magicians and the priests on the other. He has indeed attempted to prove his position in the article '*Zauber und Aberglaube*' of his *Reallexikon*, but neither the evidence nor the proof, such as he has given, can be regarded as conclusive.

Supposing the ideas of prayer and sacrifice to have been derived from magical practices, which are assumed on the evidence of the beliefs and practices of the existing savage races to be of immemorial antiquity and very prevalent in primitive times, we would expect to find the very first prayers and sacrifices entirely of a magical character, but gradually growing more and more religious as time advanced. The testimony of the old Indian and Iranian literatures, however, points emphatically to a different conclusion. From the *Ṛigveda* as well as from the Gāthic hymns,[2] as compared with the later Vedas and the later Iranian literature respectively, it is quite clear that in the earliest Indo-Aryan and Iranian periods at any rate, the character of both prayer and sacrifice is much purer and nobler than what we find in the later periods. Not only this, but the stages by which both prayer and sacrifice begin to assume a magical character can be quite clearly seen from the two literatures, and especially from the Vedic literature. In the latter we find almost a vivid picture of how the simple prayers of the worshippers, addressed to the gods to bestow upon them what earthly benefits they were in need of, and contained in the oldest part of the *Ṛigveda*, by gradual stages come to possess a magical potency which so completely changes the original character of the prayer that in the later period it is no longer necessary to know or understand its meaning: the prayer thus becomes practically identical with a

[1] ERE., II. [2] 'Magic (Iranian),' ERE., p. 293a.

magical charm.[1] The character of the sacrifice also undergoes a similar change. Originally, something was offered to gods so that they might grant to the worshippers something else which was in their power. Instead of this, in the later *Saṁhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*, we find that the sacrifices are not meant to persuade the gods to bestow a blessing, but the correct performance of the sacrifice has the power to compel the gods to do what the worshipper wants. This belief in the magical potency of prayer and sacrifice is on the whole a later development. Nor can it be argued with any plausibility that during the period of the *Ṛigveda* and the Gāthic hymns, prayer and sacrifice had already completely extricated themselves from their original magical character.

The nature of a magical spell is so entirely opposed to that of a prayer, that it is impossible to think the latter could have, by any process of development, been derived from the former. For a charm usually consists of a fixed number of words (or rather letters), which are believed to possess a magical power; whether it is a good composition, or even has any meaning at all, is not important. Sometimes there may not be in it even a single word that means anything, and yet it may be considered to be the most effective of charms. Plenty of such charms exist in India today which are used against snake- or scorpion-bites and to remove various diseases. Nor is it usual to find that a magical charm has been given up because it was meaningless, to be replaced by one which was full of meaning. One charm may have been thought more effective than the other, but this does

[1] 'That in many cases charms and spells are survivals of prayer-formulæ from which all spirit of religion has entirely evaporated—all students of the science of religion would now admit. That prayer may stiffen into traditional formulæ, and then become vain repetitions which may actually be unintelligible to those who utter them, and so be conceived to have a force which is purely magical and a "nature practically assimilated more or less to that of charms" (Tylor, PC., II, pp. 372-3) is a fact which cannot be denied.'—F.B. Jevons, *An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Religion*, 1908, p. 150f.

not change the character of a charm. It still remains as meaningless as ever.

According to Dr. Marett, 'disappointed experience' causes the actual or virtual imperatives of a magical formula to dwindle into optatives. He says: '"Let the demon of smallpox depart!" is replaced by the more humble "Grandfather Smallpox, go away!" where the affectionate appellative (employed, however, in all likelihood merely to cajole) signalizes an approach to the genuine spirit of prayer.'[1] But this explanation that a change from spell to prayer was due to 'disappointed experience', which is somewhat similar to what Frazer says about the relation between magic and religion, viz. that men took to religion because they were disappointed with magic, does not adequately account for the change.

Moreover, if it is true that there were families of magicians in which the magical charms were handed down from generation to generation as an inestimable treasure, just as the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* were, any change in the magical formulas would be all the more difficult, because only those charms which were known to the members of recognized families of magicians would be considered effective. If anybody could compose charms, and if new charms were as efficacious as the old ones, people would feel no necessity to have professional magicians, and there would not be a hereditary class of these magicians. A charm is by its very nature a secret possession, secretly and not—like hymns—openly handed down. Whether one hymn was better composed than another could be discovered by putting them side by side and comparing them, but not so the charms.

It might be argued that if charms are merely a jumble of unmeaning words, and have no tendency to change, how are the charms found in the *Atharvaveda* to be explained, and how did they come about? It might again be asked if

[1] EB., s.v. *Prayer*, XXII, p. 257.

it is not more probable that the charms found in the *Atharvaveda*, and some of those given by Skeat in his *Malay Magic*, mark a transitional stage between a proper magical charm and a prayer.

The answer to this is that the charms of the *Atharvaveda*, and many of those found in Malay, are not truly magical charms. They are degenerate forms of prayer used for magical purposes, and may for the sake of convenience be called magical-prayers. It is regrettable that this distinction should not have been made before, since it would have saved a great deal of misunderstanding.

What we have said here does not, however, mean that we consider magical charms to have been derived from prayer by a process of degeneration. In our opinion, prayers and charms existed side by side but quite independently of each other, and from very early times. But when through natural causes the importance of magic increased, it brought under its sway even the priestly classes who composed hymns and prayers, and this influence of magic was naturally reflected in their compositions.

This again lends an argument in favour of the view that the charms of the *Atharvaveda* do not go back to a period previous to the composition of the *Ṛigveda*. They could not have existed in the same form as found in the *Atharvaveda* because the form of language in which they are composed is later than the one found in the *Ṛigveda*. Nor can they be regarded as mere translations into Vedic Sanskrit of charms which existed among the masses from a very remote antiquity. Firstly, because the Atharvanic charms do not appear in a very popular form; and secondly, a sudden desire for such a translation is inexplicable since we have no trace of a charm in the older form of language. This rewriting or recomposing of charms in the sacred language also appears improbable, if the comparatively conservative nature of charms is taken into consideration.

Further, if prayer and sacrifice were developed out of their magical antecedents, however gradually this change may

be supposed to have occurred, it could have taken place in only two ways, either consciously or unconsciously. Either primitive men actually and consciously preferred religious to magical practices (and for this we will have to assume that the primitives not only could distinguish magic from religion, but were actually disappointed with the former); or there was an unconscious reaction against magic, by which they abhorred magic and favoured religion. For this latter explanation we will have to assume that at a certain indefinite period in the mental development of man, there grew up in him a sudden good sense which brought him to the right track. In our opinion it requires no argument to show that the early man of whom we are speaking could neither distinguish between magic and religion, nor did there occur any change in his mental or physical constitution by which he gave up the lower practices and embraced the higher.

Again, if Dr. Marett[1] is right in grouping 'the forms of explicit address under three categories, according as the power is conceived by the applicant to be (i) on a higher, or (ii) much the same, or (iii) on a lower plane of dignity and authority', and then in saying that the first gives rise to prayer proper, leading to self-abasement and confession of sin, etc.; the second to bargaining in which the spirit of *do ut des* prevails; and the third to positive hectoring with dictation, threats and abuse, we must realize that, in deriving prayer from charms, not only the character of the address but the very conception of the power to which it is directed must undergo a complete change. Unless the deity which was believed to be coercible in obtaining a desired object, becomes by some process a higher power inspiring awe, the magical incantation can never become a prayer in any sense. It is not sufficient to admit that there existed both the lower and the higher powers side by side, and separate forms of addresses were used according to the character of the deity—which is indeed our position—but it must be the

[1] loc. cit., p. 256b.

same power which was originally inferior but later became higher.[1] Thus with regard to the I.E. gods it will have to be proved that they were one and all of them originally simple, magical spirits, but at the beginning of the I.E. period became possessed of divine characteristics that the evidence of language bears witness to; a thing which we fear there is no chance of proving.

It is, however, arguable that the first god or gods were developed out of magic powers (thus for instance, smallpox was in the beginning an evil power, a demon, but through 'disappointed experience', he gradually became a good power having an evil aspect, and ultimately the god Smallpox), and that to these it had become customary to address a prayer and not a charm; and that it was when this stage of gods and prayers was reached, that the natural phenomena were conceived as gods to whom only prayers and not charms were addressed. But if this were so, we ought to have found at least some gods who were derived from magic along with the nature-gods, especially if the former were older than the latter. This however does not appear to have been the case. In no branch of the I.E. peoples do we find a god of Smallpox, Fever, Jaundice, Miscarriage or Death, who can be shown to be older than the gods of

1 Because otherwise the derivation of one from the other would be impossible. An illustration would make this clearer. When a magical formula is repeated or the language of command used, the power is generally considered to be an evil power, i.e. a demon. When, however, this imperative is replaced by an optative, such as, 'Grandfather Smallpox, go away!', the conception of the character of the power necessarily undergoes a change, however slight the change may be. Thus smallpox is no longer simply a demon, but a power which likes being flattered. He might not leave if he were merely commanded to do so, but he may if he is addressed as Grandfather. But this is only a sign of 'an approach to the genuine spirit of prayer', not yet a prayer proper. When an actual prayer is addressed to smallpox, it will no longer be a demon but a god. Sending smallpox among men may have fallen to his lot, but he can be propitiated. If he is duly prayed to and worshipped, he will not only keep smallpox away, but cure the person who is suffering from it. Thus a change in the nature of an address must bring about a change in the conception of the nature of a power.

nature. Wherever they exist, they are still found as demons and nothing else.

On the contrary if we assume that, although there may have existed certain magical beliefs, the I.E. peoples were never from the most ancient times entirely dominated by magic, but that magic as such was fully developed when the I.E. tribes had spread over the two continents as different peoples, we can better explain the noble religious sentiments of the I.E. and the early Indo-Iranian periods, the lack of developed and despotic priesthood, the simplicity of the ceremonial, and the crude but childishly simple nature of the prayers addressed to the various gods. According to this assumption, the I.E. gods will be higher supernatural beings conceived as beneficent powers, but through the belief that they possessed human qualities with their superhuman powers, regarded as being on the same level as the worshippers. Such an attitude can be proved to have prevailed among the eastern branch of the I.E.s till the time of the *Ṛigveda*.

There is thus, in our opinion, a psychological difference between a magical charm and a prayer of religion just as there is between magic and religion in general, an opinion which we are glad to find is to a certain extent in agreement with that expressed by Professor Edwards[1] in the following words: 'The *method* of the genuine prayer is essentially distinct from that of the spell; it is the method of appeal; of moral suasion; it is therefore marked by humility and reverence, whereas the spell is magical, uses the method of command or constraint, and is marked by a spirit of self-confidence and self-sufficiency.'

Even Schrader,[2] after attempting to prove from philological evidence—which appears to us singularly vague and inconclusive—that worship is based on magical practices, is forced to admit, that 'a higher form of divine worship was developed among the Aryans (i.e. I.E.s) *even in prehistoric*

[1] *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 121ff. [2] ERE., II, p. 40.

*times*, in which real, if exceedingly primitive sacrificial rites were employed'. He adds further that the history of language also points to no other conclusion in this respect because 'the expressions for "sacrifice", "to sacrifice", "sacrificial animal", in the separate Aryan (i.e. I.E.) languages, extend for the greater part beyond the realm of magic, and belong to a higher class of words, whose fundamental meaning we are wont to express in our language by the term "holy".'[1] Moreover, the existence of real sacrificial rites can be proved 'among all the I.E. peoples, the Slavs, the Lithuanians, as well as the Greeks and the Indian'.[2]

It is a well known fact, that the Vedic Indians, the Iranians, as well as the Greeks and the Romans of historic times, offered sacrifices in fire kindled on an altar, believing that through the smoke or the flame of it the gifts were carried to and reached the gods. It does not, however, appear, as is held by Schrader, that the use of fire for this purpose was known from the earliest I.E. times, and what we learn from Herodotus[3] (I, 32) about the old Persians and the Scythians, probably holds true of the common I.E. period. According to Herodotus the old Persian sacrifice consisted in spreading the food they were going to offer to the gods on a specially prepared litter, on which the gods invoked in prayers were believed to descend, sit down and partake of the offered food. This appears to be in some degree corroborated by philological evidence. For the 'sacrificial litter' we have the following words: Sk. *barhis*, Av. *baresman* = Old Pruss. *balsinis* 'cushion', *pobalso* 'pillow', Serv. *blazina* 'cushion', 'feather bed', Old Nor. *bolstr*, O.H.G. *bolstar* 'pillow', Goth. *badi* 'bed', Lat. *fodio*, 'tomb, grave'.[4] The use of fire for sacrifice was also unknown, says Schrader,[5] to the early Litu-Prussians as well as the Teutons, and speaking of the Vedic Indians, Oldenberg[6] observes that 'in the

[1] ibid. [2] ibid. [3] ibid.
[4] ibid.; cf. Feist, *Kultur*, p. 140. [5] Schrader, op. cit.
[6] RV., pp. 343ff., as quoted by Schrader, op. cit.

sacrificial fire of the Veda we find an innovation of an advanced sacrificial technique'. Thus the early I.E. sacrifice, as we find it among the Old Persians, the Litu-Prussians, and the Teutons, may have consisted of a ceremonious slaughter of a sacrificial victim, boiling and then offering of its flesh to the gods either by spreading it out on the place of sacrifice itself, or raising it into the air or hanging it on the trees, and sitting down to a feast after the gods had come down and partaken of the offering.

What was the idea behind this, as yet, crude form of sacrifice, it is difficult to say, but here again we cannot agree with what Schrader considers to be probable. According to him the 'worshipper tries to *refresh* his gods with the *food* and *drink* of which he himself partakes', just as he tries to strengthen his dead ancestors; and thus, he says, 'the sacrificial rites very closely resemble the entertaining of the dead', that we find prevailed in the early I.E. times. 'There was a time', he declares, 'when only the dead were supplied with food and drink, and when man sought to obtain influence over the powers of nature only by means of magic... But the more he thought of personification gaining precedence over magic, the more did people begin to transfer the sacrificial customs usual in the service of the dead to the worship of the heavenly powers, and then the further change arose naturally from this state of affairs, viz. that the sacrificial gifts were spread *on* the ground instead of being buried *in* it.' Although Schrader expressly denies it, this explanation appears to us to be far-fetched. The idea of refreshing or strengthening the gods might have existed side by side with the idea of pleasing the gods, but it is more natural to assume the latter as the idea which primarily underlies the offering of sacrifice, rather than the former.[1] We indeed

[1] According to Grimm, 'the motive of sacrifices was everywhere the same: either to render thanks to the gods for their kindnesses, or to appease their anger; the gods were to be kept gracious, or to be more gracious again.' He makes no mention of the motive of feeding or strengthening the gods.—TM., I, p. 41.

find in the *Ṛigveda* the thought that the sacrifice strengthens the god to whom it is offered, but this need not mean anything more than that the god, pleased with the worshipper, performs the deed more enthusiastically than he would have otherwise done. The sacrifice thus simply creates and increases the god's enthusiasm for conferring a blessing upon the worshipper, and whatever power or strength he possessed remained unchanged. If it were necessary for the gods to be strengthened like the spirits of the dead, we should naturally have expected to find, from the time any sacrifices were offered at all, a system of regular sacrifices by which the gods could be sustained like the dead ancestors. But regular sacrifices to the gods at appointed times is a later institution than those to the spirits of the dead. It is indeed absurd to maintain that the 'heavenly ones' who were conceived as great and mighty beings, fit to be revered and worshipped because of their exalted position, should at the same time be thought of as so weak as to require nourishment at the hands of mortals. Nor does the fact that the food which men ate was offered to the gods as well as the dead, show that the sacrifice was meant to strengthen the gods. The gods were certainly invited to the sacrifice and to eat their share of it, not because they would otherwise go hungry but simply because it was believed that they enjoyed the sacrificial food and were pleased with the worshipper who offered it.[1] In the case of the dead ancestors on the other hand, it was thought that they would suffer through hunger, if food was not offered to them and, becoming angry at this, would torment those who failed in their duty.

Food and drink were at that time the most important things in life and in offering them to the gods and to a certain extent to the dead ancestors, they simply offered in order to gain their favour by pleasing, as they had observed that those were the things which pleased them most.[2]

[1] ibid.

[2] '*Der Indogermane wendet sich also mit Opfern an seine Götter lediglich*

Similarly when we find sure traces of human sacrifice, we need not assume cannibalism, or the horse-sacrifice need not necessarily be explained, as is done by Schrader,[1] on the assumption of the practice of eating horse-flesh, although we do not deny the possibility that both of these practices may have existed even among the I.E.s. In these, as in other sacrifices, men sought to please the gods as well as the ancestors by offering what was dear and valuable to themselves. Schrader also offers an optional explanation by saying that, 'in milder times a change in this sacrificial idea has taken place, in the sense that a human being was regarded as the best sacrifice that could be brought to the gods'.[2] Schrader has here to introduce an arbitrary assumption of a *change*, because he derives religious practices from magic and ancestor-worship. On the basis of our view such assumption is unnecessary. Thus, a chosen youth or a fine horse was offered in sacrifice when their importance and value were fully realized. The idea of *pleasing* also would better explain the existence of some forms, at any rate, of ancestor-worship than the idea of merely strengthening or refreshing. Offerings to the dead after the funeral, for instance, were meant to feed the ancestor, but at the same time to keep his spirit far from doing any mischief to the surviving members of his family by keeping him pleased with them; and when the spirit is pleased it would not only do no harm, but could actually protect and bestow blessings upon them. Schrader himself bears testimony to this in the following words: 'The ancestors are everywhere conceived as real and powerful beings, watching especially over the welfare of the family'.[3]

*in dem Wunsche, ein Gut zu erlangen, sei es mit der Bitte um Förderung, sei es indirekt mit der Bitte um Anwendung des göttlichen Zornes. Der Weg, den er hierbei einschlagt, ist der denkbar einfachste: die Speise und den Trank, an denen er sich selbst erfreut, setzt er den Göttern vor, um sie gnädig für sich zu stimmen. Dieser höchst einfache Grundgedanke des antiken Opfers musz in ungemein fruhe Zeit zuruckgehen'.*—Schrader, 2nd ed., II, p. 135.

[1] Schrader, AR., p. 42a.

[2] Schrader, AR., p. 42a.

[3] Schrader, AR., p. 23b.

We also find the following in the *Ṛigveda*.[1]

'....accept this sacrifice of ours with favour. Harm us not, O Fathers, if we, due to our nature as men (*puruṣatā*) have committed any sin against you'.[2]

An important instance of this is to be found in the sacrifices which were offered when it was believed that the tribe or the family was the subject of the god's wrath, due to the commission of an act that was forbidden by some of its members or an omission to perform one that it was his duty to perform. This belief existed not only among the I.E.s but appears to be universal. Here, at any rate, there is no other idea present but that of regaining the favour of the god.

The conclusion we have reached is well expressed by Tylor in the following two passages:

'As prayer is a request made to a deity as if he were a man, so sacrifice is a gift made to a deity as if he were a man. The human types of both may be studied unchanged in social life to this day. The suppliant who bows before his chief, laying a gift at his feet and making his humble petition, displays the anthropomorphic model and origin at once of sacrifice and prayer.'[3]

'The most child-like kind of offering, the giving of a gift with as yet no definite thought how the receiver can take and use it; but offered with the full belief and firm faith

[1] X. 15. 6.

[2] C.G. and B.Z. Seligman in their article on the Veddas, record the following:

'The *yaku* or the spirits (pl. of *yaka*) of the recently dead, called collectively the Nae Yaku, are supposed to stand towards the surviving members of the group in the light of friends and relatives, who, if well treated, will continue to show loving kindness to their survivors and only if neglected will show disgust and anger by withdrawing their assistance or even becoming actively hostile.'

'Hence an offering within a week or two after death is usual' but 'a few Veddas stated that they would not hold a Nae Yaku ceremony until they specially required the help of the *Yaku* or until misfortune threatened or overtook them.'—ERE., XII, p. 599.

[3] PC., 6th ed., II, p. 375.

that it will please the god and thus induce him to grant the worshipper's desire, is in my opinion the most primitive as it certainly is the most rudimentary sacrifice.'[1]

Whatever the I.E.s ate or drank they offered to the gods, and since their primary food was meat and primary drink was mead, the same constituted the articles of sacrifice.[2] The sacrifice was always accompanied by prayer. According to what we have held of the relationship between magic and religion, the I.E. prayer was not made up of magical formulas, but was of the type of the Ṛigvedic prayer, 'we give this to thee so that you may give to us', much more crudely and much less poetically expressed. It was a matter of bargaining, and so it is not surprising that the idea of thanksgiving should make its appearance very late and be unknown to the Vedic and the Homeric poets.[3]

Grimm[4] appears to divide ancient sacrifices into four classes, viz. *thank*-offerings (*Dankopfer*) for the success already achieved, e.g. hunting or battle; *sin*-offerings or conciliatory or propitiatory offerings (*Sühnopfer*) when there was famine or failure of crops; the third species of sacrifice is when 'one seeks to know the issue of an enterprise, and to secure the aid of the gods to whom it is presented'; and the fourth class comprises 'special sacrifices for particular occasions, such as coronations, births, weddings and funerals, which were also for the most part coupled with solemn banquets'. Grimm regards the first two as the chief, while

1 ibid., p. 376; but cf. James, E.D., *Primitive Ritual and Belief*, pp. 115ff.; and Hopkins, *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, ch. 'Sacrifice'. According to Jevons neither the gift-theory, nor the fear-theory, nor the theory of ancestor-worship, which combines the first two, explains the origin of worship. He finds it in the desire for communion: 'The core of worship', he says, 'is communion; offerings in the sense of gifts are a comparatively modern institution both in ancestor-worship and in the worship of the gods; and ancestor-worship is later than and modelled on, the worship of the gods.'—*Introduction to the History of Religion*, 1896, p. 225.

2 'Animal sacrifices are natural to the warrior, the hunter, the herdsman, while the husbandman will offer up grain and flowers.'—Grimm, TM., I, p. 42. It is possible that human sacrifice also existed at that time.

3 Schrader, AR., p. 42b. 4 TM., I, pp. 41-42.

Schrader divides sacrifices into these two classes only.[1] Professor Edwards[2] on the other hand, holding that the origin and development of sacrifice are matters of much dispute, distinguishes four attitudes in sacrificial observances:

(1) the attitude of *gratitude*, which leads to thanksgiving,

(2) the attitude of *bargaining*,

(3) craving for *participation* or communion, and

(4) desire for *reconciliation*, the offering being regarded as an act of *propitiation* or *atonement*, but adds that (4) may perhaps be placed first in view of the prominence of fear in primitive religion.

In our opinion, the successive stages in the development of sacrifice would be:

(1) the desire of propitiation, in order that the god may be benevolent and may not be displeased. The idea of reconciliation follows the more primitive desire to propitiate;

(2) the idea or motive of *bargaining*, found in the *Ṛigveda*;

(3) next, the sacrifice was believed to possess magical potency as found in the later *Saṁhitās* and the *Brāhmaṇas*;

(4) and lastly it was regarded as an act of atonement, purification or accumulating merit in the next world. This later idea is found in the Indian epics and the *Purāṇas*.

These stages are indeed with special reference to the I.E. sacrifice, but they also appear to present a psychological sequence. Any criticism showing the unsatisfactory character of the above three schemes and the justification of our own seems to be unnecessary, apart from mentioning that gratitude has never led to sacrifice in very early times and that the association of this sentiment with sacrifice occurs very

[1] *Reallexicon*, 2nd ed., II, p. 135a. [2] op. cit., pp. 17-18.

late.[1] Thus to say that it was one of the original motives of sacrifice, or even to classify sacrifices in such a way that one of the divisions is for thank-offering sacrifices is quite incorrect. It is however assumed that the English word *thank*-offering is a correct translation of what the German authors call *Dank*-opfer.

### 2. *Ancestor-worship*

By the side of the belief in the 'heavenly ones' as gods and the practice of offering them sacrifices, we have also to recognize the existence of (*a*) ancestor-worship and (*b*) fetish-worship even in the Indo-European period.

It is not altogether beyond question that the care bestowed upon the dead ancestors can be called worship in the proper sense of the term.[2] It will be readily admitted that the services which the worshipper endeavours to render to the dead ancestors, are not of the same kind as when he is propitiating a god, or even a fetish.[3] In the case of the ancestor, his first idea is to make provision for him, after he is dead; secondly, to keep him satisfied and thus far from doing any harm to the surviving members of his family; and only thirdly, to ask him to continue to protect the family even after death as he used to do when alive, which last sentiment (viz. one of receiving protection), is the most primary element in the worship of a god or a fetish. Schrader[4] also expresses the same opinion: '*Was das indogermanische Urvolk betrifft, soll dem Opfer gezeigt werden, dass bereits damals die "Himmlischen" (deivos), wahrscheinlich nach der Analogie des Totendienstes, mit Speise und Trank gestärkt wurden, damit sie kräftige und willfährige Freunde des Menschen würden, so dass man also schon für die indogermanische Urzeit von einem gewissen religiösen Kultus reden kann.*' And Sir William Crooke[5] remarks: 'It is

[1] Schrader, 2nd ed., II, p. 133; Oldenberg, RV., 2nd ed., pp. 310ff.; Wackernagel, J., *Uber den Ursprung des Brahmanismus*, p. 18.

[2] Jevons, op. cit., pp. 194ff.; see also ch. v.

[3] cf. Hopkins, *Origin and Evolution of Religion*, pp. 74–6.

[4] Schrader, p. 973.

[5] 'Ancestor-worship', ERE., I, p. 428a. 'In Greece sacrifices to the dead

obvious that the loving sympathy and ministrations of the living to the departed do not rise to the dignity of worship.'

That the I.E.s, in common with all people, paid great attention to their dead, cannot be doubted. The dead man was either buried or burnt, and on the whole, as is proved by Schrader,[1] burial appears to be the more primitive custom. Various explanations have been offered to account for this change. The first explanation was offered by Erwin Rohde,[2] according to whose view 'cremation is meant to effect the speedy and complete separation of the soul from the body, and this from an affectionate as well as a selfish motive. As long as the body lasts, the soul is bound to it; it enjoys no rest itself and allows none to the survivors, whom it terrifies by manifold appearances'. S. Müller[3] arrives at the conclusion that release of the soul from the body, so that it might find peace in the other life, was the true purpose of cremation, while Much lays greater emphasis on the release of the survivors of the dead man from the fear of him, than on the release of his soul;[4] and here Much appropriately appeals to the custom of the burning of witches and sorcerers, in which the main idea was to prevent their return. Ridgeway, however, attributes cremation simply to 'the migration of races', and thinks that it originated with the belief 'that an entrance into a world of the blest was secured only by those who were burned by fire and the conviction that it is only by fire that man can be freed from the pollution which death brings along with it'.

Whether cremation first originated among the I.E.s or any other people, or among all peoples independently of each other, we offer the following in explanation of the origin of the idea of paying attention to the dead as well as that of cremation.

It is inherently probable, and there is archaeological

were distinguished from those to the gods.'—Frazer, GB., 3rd ed., IV, i, p. 316, n. 1. See the references there given.

[1] ERE., II, pp. 16–19.

[2] *Psyche*, Eng. tr., London, 1925, p. 21; see ERE., op. cit.

[3] *Nordische Altertumskunde*, I, pp. 363ff.

[4] 'The worship of ancestors is a natural development of the dread of ghosts.'—J. Lubbock, *Origin of Civilization*, 1912, p. 272.

evidence to prove it, that in the most primitive times, a dead man was not cared for any more than the animals care for a dead animal. As soon as he was dead he was thrown aside, without any thought whatever. But gradually men learnt to live together and be of use to each other. Those that were the eldest and the strongest protected and looked after the younger. This usefulness of the elders evolved a sentiment of affection and thankfulness. Although the head of the family may have treated them harshly, they had realized that his help and guidance was very necessary to them, and the sentiment of affection could have been felt in the most primitive conditions of life, as it is found to exist among the lowest of animals.[1] When this affection was evolved, the members of the family could not bear to neglect the body of the dead altogether and so they tried to protect and preserve it, thus gradually coming to bury the dead body; and burial may have existed at a time when they had as yet given no thought as to what happened when a person was dead. They had not as yet distinguished between the body and the spirit. They submitted themselves to the occurrence without question or thought. But in course of time they became capable of thinking a little, and then, probably through the observation of dreams, they thought that there was a 'fleeting-something' in man, which could leave the body as well as return to it. When they were asleep it left them only temporarily but, when dead, it passed out finally. No coherent and consistent idea was, however, yet formed and neither had animism in the true sense of the word been conceived. This 'fleeting-something' was considered to possess the whole personality of the dead person, except the quality of being visible. When this thought was developed they began to fear the dead man, which they had not done so far, and this was the origin of the belief in demons.[2] With this fear came the idea of

[1] See Jevons, op. cit., p. 48; Tylor, PC., II, p. 32.

[2] '*Die Wurzeln des Dämonenglaubens werden heute vielfach nur in der Allbeseelung der Natur gedacht, aber kaum mit Recht.*'—Wilke, RI., p. 73.

burying various things with the dead man that his spirit might be kept pleased. With the belief in ghosts there arose stories of the good and especially the bad things they did. This again made them fear the dead ancestor still more. As a result of this fear came the desire to get rid of the spirit as best they could, and the burning of the corpse occurred to them as the best means of doing it. By burning the dead body they thought they could soon achieve two ends; firstly, the dead man would live in peace in the other world, and secondly, his spirit would not torment the survivors, but let them live in happiness and free from fear.

The comparative study of funeral rites prevailing among the different I.E. nations and the evidence of prehistoric graves make it probable that certain funeral ceremonies were performed in the old I.E. days. The corpse was usually buried with the various household utensils and there were lamentations for the dead. The body was carried in a procession and the men who carried it had to go through a process of purification on returning from the funeral. After this there was a funeral feast. There were also some ceremonies to be performed after the dead body had been disposed of, but their exact or even approximately exact character in the united I.E. days is difficult to ascertain. In this respect, as in practically everything concerning the I.E.s, authors are everywhere prone to attribute too much to that remote period. Certain ceremonies might, however, have been performed at appointed times, at which food and drink was offered to the spirit of the departed.

Besides the funeral feast,[1] which immediately followed the burial, evidence of certain feasts at appointed times is to be found among most of the I.E. branches. Originally, the offering of food to the dead ancestors as well as eating and drinking by the relatives along with the dead did not take place at the house, but in the neighbourhood of the grave. Food and drink was also offered in specially

[1] ERE., II, pp. 25-26.

dug up trenches and at cross roads. At these feasts the ancestors were solemnly summoned to come and partake of the food and were as solemnly dismissed at the close of the feast. For example in Indian *Pitṛyajña* we read:

'After depositing the *piṇḍa* he (the offerer) utters the words, "Ye Pitaras, may this be savoury to your taste, may each one enjoy his share". Afterwards he dismisses the Pitaras with the words: "Depart, ye lovely Pitaras, to your old mysterious ways, give us riches and good fortune, grant us abundant possession in men".'[1]

Since burial was the general custom of the disposal of the dead during the I.E. times, earth was naturally conceived as the abode of the dead. The idea that the ancestors dwelt in abodes far removed from the graves was very probably an independent development among the I.E. peoples, and it is natural to expect it to have gone with the beginning and growth of the custom of cremation.[2]

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### 3. *Fetish-Worship*

Along with the primitive religions all over the world, Schrader[3] thinks 'that the worship of stones, stumps and trees, can also be proved to have existed among the I.E.s', and Frazer[4] observes that 'tree-worship is well attested for

[1] Caland, *Totenverehrung*, p. 5f. quoted by Schrader, ERE., II, p. 27[a].
[2] cf. ERE., II, pp. 30[b]-31[a].
[3] ERE., II, pp. 44ff. [4] GB., II, p. 9.

all the great European families of the Aryan stock'. Although the evidence collected by Schrader is much later in date and inconclusive, some sort of fetish-worship may have existed in the very primitive I.E. times. But this fetish-worship of the I.E.s, like their magic, was never developed to such an extent as to make it impossible to have any higher conception of a divinity, as is the case with some of the savage tribes of the present day, whose religious ideas do not go beyond magic and fetishism.

At first the various objects must have been worshipped merely as fetishes, i.e. as themselves capable of acting, but later on they might have been conceived of as possessing a divine *anima*. When, however, the cult of the 'heavenly ones' was developed, fetish-worship fell into the background, although it was never entirely non-existent. The simultaneous existence of these two kinds of worship is probably attested by the widely prevalent relationship between the god of thunder and the oak, the notion being developed by putting together the ideas of the worship of the oak and of the god of thunder.

It is quite certain that there were no temples and no images in the I.E. times as there were none even in the period of the *Ṛigveda*. Tacitus[1] observed a similar lack among the Germans: the building of temples is a very recent development.[2] With regard to the Persians Herodotus says: 'They are not in the habit of erecting images, temples, or altars; indeed, they charge those who do so with folly, because—I suppose—they do not, like the Greeks, hold the gods to be of human shape. Their practice is to climb the highest mountains and sacrifice to Zeus, by which name they call the whole circle of the sky....'[3]

### 4. *Other Indo-European rites*

In addition to the various special and general feasts to the dead, Schrader[4] thinks that the observance of a great

[1] *Germania*, ch. ix.
[2] Carnoy, IE., p. 233.
[3] I, 131.
[4] ERE., II, pp. 47[a] ff.

festival of the dead, especially in the wintry half of the year, can be proved to have existed among almost all the I.E. peoples, and that these feasts are found to be used as the basis for reckoning of dates. The existence of regular festivals in honour of the 'heavenly ones' cannot be proved with any certainty, and the older view which regarded the winter and summer solstices as the most ancient feast-dates cannot be regarded as tenable.[1] The prevalence everywhere of the custom of kindling a fire and dancing and playing round it probably indicates that there was some such ceremony in I.E. times, the original signification and purpose of which is, however, completely lost sight of. The mid-summer fires are by some interpreted as rain-charms,[2] while others see in it a sun-charm,[3] since fire was supposed to represent the light and heat of the summer sun, to which the growing vegetation must be exposed. The very existence of this ceremony being quite conjectural, as it is in the main based on such late evidence as the *Mahāvarata* ceremony of the Indians (of the details and the original character of which nothing can even be conjectured), an attempt to explain its significance under such circumstances seems to us in the highest degree hazardous. The case is in no way different when an attempt is made to find traces of a spring festival in the worship of the Teutonic *Ôstara*, and the Indian *Uṣas*.[4]

We have already pointed out that the moon was the earliest measure of time, since the phases of the moon were the most striking phenomena of regular periodical occurrence. That these phases, and more especially the extremes, should be made occasions of feasts and festivals is quite understandable and their existence is therefore probable. But here again we cannot go beyond asserting that some undetermined and undeterminable sort of ceremonies or feasts might have been connected with them. In this connexion Oldenberg observes that in India the new and the full moon

[1] cf. Hirt, *Indogermanen*, pp. 544 and 750. [2] Schrader, op. cit., p. 48.
[3] Mannhardt, *Der Baumkultus*, pp. 497, 576, 521. [4] ERE., II, p. 48b.

sacrifices belong to the regular and most ancient offerings to the gods.[1]

## II. Origin and Growth of Priesthood

We have already expressed the opinion that prayer and sacrifice were not directly derived from magical charms and practices. Similarly we do not think that the magician was the first priest of the I.E. tribes. We will first consider the philological evidence brought forward by Schrader to prove a contrary view.

Schrader[2] bases the conclusion of the origin of the priesthood in particular on the hypothesis that (i) Sk. *brahmán* (masc.) is 'the most important designation of the priest in the language of ancient India', while *brahmán* (neut.) originally meant a 'magic formula' and not devotion; and (ii) that Lat. *flâmen* was originally a neuter conception meaning 'priesthood', thus arriving at the equation Sk. *brahman* = Lat. *flamen*, which he thinks 'attests the existence in primitive times of the learned in magic formulas',[3] the forerunners of the priests.

In the first place, Schrader makes no attempt to prove that *brahmán* is in fact the oldest designation of the priest, since the fact of its being 'the most important designation' is altogether irrelevant: for the Ṛigvedic period being one when prayers held a very high position in religion, its importance dating from that time is quite natural.

Secondly, the meaning given by Böhtlingk and Roth[4] to the word *bráhman*, viz. 'the devotion which appears as intensity and depth of feeling, and aspires towards the god', apparently deriving the word from *bṛh* 'to swell',[5] seems to me to be the original signification of that term.

[1] RV., pp. 440ff.; see also, Hillebrandt, *Das altindische Neu- und Vollmondsopfer*, Jena, 1880.

[2] ERE., II, p. 42b. [3] op. cit., p. 43b.

[4] Petersberg, p. 135; see also Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1899, p. 737.

[5] ibid., s.v. *brahmán*.

Thirdly, since the Latin word *flâmen* means (masc.) 'he who burns', (neut.) 'a blowing,' 'blast',[1] there does not appear to be anything common between the words *flâmen* and *brahmán*. The idea of burning which is ever present in the word *flâmen*, in whatever various senses it comes to be used in later times, is never connected with the word *brahmán* or its root *bṛh*; neither is there any word in the Sanskrit language which is cognate with *brahmán* and has the idea of burning. If *flâmen* really meant a 'priesthood' originally, its prototype in character though not in name may be found in the Indo-Iranian *Atharvan*, and not in *brahmán*. Moreover the word *flâmen* is in all probability much later than the word *brahmán*. If it is admitted that *brahmán* is an I.E. word and then supposed that *brahmán=flâmen*, we will have to admit that sacrifices were offered in fire in the I.E. times, a thing which Schrader himself does not believe.[2]

The equation is again questionable on philological grounds and may perhaps be regarded as of late thoroughly discredited. It was first questioned by Walde,[3] and H. Hirt makes the following remark: '*Ich sehe keinen Grund, die Zusammengehörigkeit zu betreiten, trotzdem folgt daraus nur, dass es die bestimmte Tätigkeit des Betens gegeben hat. "Das Wort flâmen", sagt Wissowa, "ist nicht die Bezeichnung einer Priesterschaft, sondern einer Funktion, der des Opfervollziehers", ebenso ist brahman im indischen nicht die Bezeichnung eines bestimmten Standes.*'[4] While Wilke says, '*zwar hat man das indische bráhman dem lateinischen flâmen gleichgestellt, aber diese Gleichung ist nicht hinreichend gesichert und auch hinsichtlich der urspünglichen Bedeutung des Wortes gehen die Ansichten der Sprachforscher auseinander*'.[5]

[1] Lewis and Short, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford, 1879, p. 756.
[2] ERE., II, p. 41a.
[3] *Lat. etymol. Wörterbuch*, 2nd ed., Heidelberg, 1910, p. 298.
[4] *Die Indogermanen*, p. 742.
[5] RI., p. 204.

Schrader also tries to derive support for his argument from the fact that there are 'frequent designations of the magician and the priest which are formed from the common I.E. root *vid- void-* "to know", but since these words are found only among the Teutons, the Litu-Prussians and the Russians, they may be regarded as having come into being after the separation of the different branches and may not go back to the united I.E. period'.[1]

We will now briefly consider the evidence of the Sanskrit language for the connexion between prayer and incantation on the one hand, and the magician and the priest on the other.

Except the word *mantra* which in the Indian vernaculars[2] has come to mean 'incantation', but which originally meant 'a hymn',[3] there cannot be found in the Sanskrit language any words for 'magic', 'magical' or 'magician' and 'priest', 'priestly' or 'priesthood' which have anything common between them. Words for the former as well as the latter conceptions have consistently borne the same meaning and have never been confused one with the other. The only old Sanskrit words for sorcerer or magician are *yātudhāna* and *yātu-vid*,[4] and there is no word for priest which can be shown to have any connexion with these. The word *māyā* occurs in the *Ṛigveda* frequently, but does not yet mean 'magic or witchcraft'. 'Mysterious, illusory, or supernatural power' is generally supposed to be its original meaning.[5] The word *māyāvid* again does not seem to appear in the *Ṛigveda*. Otherwise Schrader would have found in it an additional support for his argument, based on the root *vid* 'to know'.

[1] Schrader, AR., pp. 42[b]-43[a].

[2] e.g. in Marathi, *mantra māraṇem* 'to throw a spell'.

[3] '*Mantra* (from the root *man* "to think") denotes in the *Ṛigveda* and later the "hymn" as the product of the singer's creative thought. In the Brāhmaṇas the word is regularly used of the poetic as well as prose utterances of the Risis.'—'*Mantra*', *Vedic Index*, II, p. 131.

[4] cf. '*Yātudhāna*', *Vedic Index*, II, p. 190.

[5] See Petersberg and other Sanskrit dictionaries.

The word *brahmán* which is considered by Schrader to have originally meant a magician in the *Ṛigveda*, denotes at first 'poet' 'sage' and then 'officiating priest' or still later 'a special class of priests',[1] and this is not questioned by Sanskrit scholars. The authors of the *Vedic Index*[2] think that the word does not mean merely 'poet' or 'sage' but can in the *Ṛigveda* almost always be translated by the word 'priest', 'since the priest was of course the singer': but they do not say that the original meaning was a priest, and that it came to mean a 'poet' or 'sage' later on. Thus the meaning of the word undoubtedly shows that the Brahman was originally a singer of the hymns and probably also the composer, who was revered for these admirable virtues of his. The simple folk of that time easily believed that prayers thus sung and sacrifices offered by such learned men would gain a quicker response than the crude manner in which they would do it. So, although it was allowable for every householder to perform his own religious rites and ceremonies, he voluntarily fell into the practice of asking the professional singer of the hymns to do it for him. Very soon after the community of these singers came to have a sort of a vested interest in maintaining the hold of sacrifice on the popular mind, and also the belief in the increased efficacy of the rites when performed by them. The simple people who had fallen into a trap set by their own ignorance, were easily imposed upon, and thus the bases of the hereditary indispensable priesthood were securely laid. It is possible that the office of the *purohita* came into existence as a result of the same process, and when it once came into existence it helped the priesthood to increase their power and influence immensely. Thus the opinion of Oldenberg[3] that the *purohita* was not the creator of the power of the priesthood appears to be more correct than the contrary view held by Roth[4] and Zimmer.[5]

[1] *Vedic Index*, II, p. 248; Muir, I, 2nd ed., p. 258. [2] II, p. 250.
[3] RV., pp. 382-3. [4] *Zur Litteratur und Geschichte des Weda*, pp. 117ff.
[5] AIL., pp. 185-203.

One of the most important causes of the existence of priesthood is attributed by Landtman [1] in his article on 'Priesthood (Primitive)' to the fact that 'very generally the gods are believed to bear ill-will to men, and therefore it is the duty of the priests to give directions as to the proper offerings'. But this cannot be said of the I.E.s since their gods, it is probably agreed, were on the whole benevolent and did not bear ill-will. Landtman however truly observes that 'priesthood, broadly speaking, owes its origin to the universal need felt by mankind of superhuman assistance in the struggle of life. Among all peoples the belief exists that, under certain circumstances, advantages of some kind or other are obtainable from the supernatural world. Man endeavours to influence by propitiation the powers which govern the universe or to control the course of events by magical means'. This is indeed a good analysis of the causes of the origin of priesthood and worship. In regard to the I.E.s however, we think that because the magical powers in which they believed were few and much less powerful and because the nature of their gods was on the whole beneficent, the I.E. worship was predominantly propitiatory; and since magic never prevailed among them to a great extent, before, at any rate, the rise of religion in the form of belief in and worship of heavenly gods, there did not have to exist a separate class of hereditary magicians as is believed by Schrader.[2]

Sir James Frazer [3] puts forward a similar but a much more clearly expressed view. He says: 'When once a special class of sorcerers has been segregated from the community and entrusted by it with the discharge of duties on which the public safety and welfare are believed to depend, these men gradually rise to wealth and power till their leaders blossom out into sacred kings;' and he explains the origin of the priests as follows: 'as time goes on the fallacy of magic becomes more and more apparent and is slowly displaced by

[1] ERE., X, pp. 278ff. [2] ERE., II, p. 43.

[3] *The Magical Origin of Kings*, London, 1920, pp. 81ff., 150ff. (First published under the title *Early History of Kingship*, 1905.

religion; in other words the magician gives way to the priest. Hence the King starting as a magician tends gradually to exchange the practice of magic for the functions of prayer and sacrifice.'[1] We have pointed out that the existence of a separate class of magicians among the early I.E.s is improbable. Neither can it be asserted, as Frazer does, that 'the fallacy of magic' had 'become apparent' at such an early period. In the greater part of the world this fallacy is not even today altogether disbelieved.[2] It is quite imaginable from what we know of these periods that there should be a strong reaction against magic in ancient Iran in the time of Zoroaster and that the *Atharvaveda* should be assigned an inferior place because of its magical contents, but to attribute as keen a capacity to distinguish between magic and religion a few thousand years before is an anachronism.

Since there is no undoubted common word for a priest in the I.E. languages, nor any other direct evidence with regard to it, our conclusions in this respect are merely conjectural. But from the fact that we can find sure beginnings of a hereditary priesthood in the Indo-Iranian period, we infer with great probability that the I.E.s also were in the habit of offering prayers or sacrifices through some men who were believed to possess qualities peculiarly suited to this purpose. This must for a long time have depended only upon personal qualifications but later tended to become hereditary, probably because the father taught the son and brought him up to take up the same profession; and the people through the influence of the father's qualities acquiesced in this custom.

[1] Frazer, op. cit.; cf. 'Priest', EB., XXII, p. 317a. Jevons declares: 'We have found nothing to support...the view that the priest was a sorcerer who had got on in the world.'—op. cit., 2nd ed., 1902, p. 296.

[2] Sir James Frazer himself admits the difficulty in detecting the fallacy of magic, for he says 'nature herself generally produces, sooner or later, effects which the magician fancies he produces by his art'.—GB., I, i, p. 242f.

## CHAPTER VII

# THE INDO-IRANIAN RELIGION

### 1. *The Indo-Iranians and the Indo-Iranian Period*

THE conclusion that the later Indians and the Iranians had lived together somewhere in the north of Persia before the period of the *Ṛigveda* is based on the similarity of the language and contents of the *Avesta* and the *Ṛigveda*. On comparing these two sacred texts it is found that entire hymns in one language can be quite easily changed into hymns in the other by applying certain very simple phonetic rules, the two languages being nothing but two different dialects of what was originally the same language.[1] We have also the equation, Av. *airya*, O. Pers. *ariya*, Sk. *ārya*, which suggests that the Indo-Iranians had already possessed a common name by which they distinguished themselves from other peoples and tribes. The very name Irân, the old name of Persia, comes from the adjective found in the *Avesta* which is used 'to describe the land from which the *airya* folk came'.[2] The Vedic Indians gave the word a definitely aristocratic meaning of 'noble', 'of good birth', and used it for themselves much more frequently and proudly than the Iranians appear to have done. Thus there was probably a slight difference of meaning in which the word was used by these two branches,[3] perhaps because the Indian branch had come into contact with the dark and dusky skinned aborigines and thus felt a greater necessity of preserving the Aryan colour and the Aryan blood than the Iranians, who, although they also came across tribes much less civilized than themselves, were not confronted by any striking difference of colour.[4]

But although it is more or less certain that the ancestors

[1] Poussin, IEII., p. 55.
[2] Moulton, 'Iranians', ERE., VII, p. 418a. [3] cf. Moulton, op. cit.
[4] Dhalla, *Zoroastrian Civilization*, N.Y., 1922, pp. 4-5.

of the Iranians and the Indians lived a common life in some definite region, it is by no means easy to determine either the region where they lived or the causes which led to their separation. It is still doubtful whether this region was situated in the north-east or the west of Persia or whether it was even in the north-west of India ; since it is sometimes suggested that the two branches had lived together in the Punjab, but later the Iranian branch emigrated for some reason or other. Here again no theory can be regarded as conclusive, but the view which has found general support is that the Indo-Iranians lived somewhere in Central Asia and outside India, and thence one of the branches entered India through the passes in the Hindukush.

Professor Gray's theory of the migration of the Indo-Iranians is as follows:

'The course of the Indo-Iranian migrations into the Iranian plateau may be described as a series of waves coming, probably in the course of centuries, through the mountain gaps to the east of the Caspian.

'The first incomers, who pronounced the sharp sibilant as *s*, went, probably by compulsion, further and further south and south-east. Other waves, pronouncing this same original sibilant as *h*, followed, some going to the west and settling in Ādarbsiǰān, some to what is now Kurdistan, some to Persia in the south-west, some to the east in Sīstān (Sākastān, 'Scythland') and Afghanistan ; the desert centre forbade any lasting habitation. The second Fargard of the *Vīdēvdāṭ* preserves a tradition of three degrees of the Iranian advance, each occupying a successive third of the area of the plateau. Very probably these invaders were partly exterminated and partly absorbed by the aborigines. The *s*-speakers were finally expelled by the *h*-speakers. A few seem to have found refuge in the Hindukush, but the great majority made their way through the mountain passes and entered the Punjab, the *h*-speakers remaining in Iran. The *s*-speakers were the Indians of the historic period, and the *h*-speakers were the Iranians.

'Thus one may explain both the similarity and the difference between *Veda* and *Avesta*; and it would seem justifiable to assume that, if the migrations actually took place as here outlined,

(*a*) the Indians were more advanced when they entered India than were the Iranians at their invasion of the plateau, and

(*b*) that the *Veda* is older in date of composition than is the *Avesta*.'[1]

That the *Ṛigveda* is older than the *Avesta* is undoubted, but there is no reason either to assume any hostility between the two sections[2] or to hold that 'the Indians were more advanced when they entered India than were the Iranians at their invasion of the plateau'. Such a comparison besides being hazardous serves no useful purpose. If the two branches lived together it is more probable that they were both equally advanced, since it is difficult to assume that they separated owing to cultural differences only. Nor is it easy to believe that this advanced branch of *s*-speakers was expelled by the *h*-speakers. The difference in pronunciation may have come about after the separation of the Indians from the Iranians.[3] This is supported by the fact that *s* was pronounced as *s* till about 1400 B.C., as is shown by the Boghaz-köi inscriptions. Otherwise however, Professor Gray's theory appears to be quite satisfactory.

## 2. *Indo-Iranian Religion*

The nature of our evidence for the religion of this period is quite different. We have here to rely upon the comparison of what is found in the oldest parts of the *Avesta* and the *Ṛigveda* and hence to deduce what probably belonged to the Indo-Iranian period. Had we possessed as authentic a copy of the old *Avesta* as we are fortunate enough to have of the *Ṛigveda*, the determination of what were the religious beliefs and practices when the Indo-Iranians were

[1] *Ratanbāi Kātrak Lectures* delivered at Oxford in 1925.

[2] cf. Keith, IM., p. 84. [3] cf. Moulton, 'Iranians', ERE., VII, p. 419[a].

one people would have been an easy matter. But that is not the case. We have not only no portion of the *Avesta* preserved to us in an unchanged form, but, unlike the Vedic religion which is only a faithfully developed form of the Indo-Iranian religion, the later Iranian religion which has left to us some literature, is altogether a different religion from the older one. The older gods are not only not worshipped but have actually become demons. Thus in the Iranian branch we have neither authentic literature nor an uninterrupted tradition. For these reasons our information is but fragmentary, and we cannot therefore go into the details of the religion of this period.[1]

In tracing the religion of the Indo-Iranian period, it is better to start with the *Avesta*, and having found there what probably may have existed in the Indo-Iranian period among the Indo-Iranian peoples, to try to find how far the conception or conceptions are found in the older part of the *Ṛigveda*. This is in fact the method we have adopted here, because what we have in the older parts of the *Ṛigveda* is certainly quite old, but this is not so with regard to the *Avesta*. In the *Avesta*, those conceptions which are decidedly of a much later date predominate to a considerable degree over the older conceptions, and thus discovering pre-Avestan elements becomes rather difficult. Everywhere we find the original gods and ideas clothed in an ethical garb, which it is not always easy to penetrate. This development is very characteristic of the Iranian religion, and is a feature which must have taken at least several centuries of independent growth.

The whole history of the Iranian religion appears to be in an extraordinarily chaotic condition, and the sacred literature of the Iranians, in our opinion, has much less of the Indo-Iranian element in it than is ordinarily supposed.[2] There is too marked a tendency to demonstrate parallelisms between

[1] A short sketch of the Avestan literature can be found in 'Avesta', by A. V. W. Jackson, in ERE., II.

[2] 'The parallels in the religious thought which the Avestan documents

the Iranian and the Vedic religions, and for this purpose to attach an exaggerated importance to the Vedic Sanskrit for the interpretation of the Avestan texts. This tendency does not seem to be altogether desirable, as it simply gives an occasion to all manner of ingenious conjectures, none of which is any the more probable for being ingenious.

On examination of what we know of the history of the Iranian religion, the Iranian religion itself and the religion of the *Ṛigveda*, one is struck more by the points of contrast than of similarity. While the religion of the *Ṛigveda* is much more primitive, the religion in the oldest Iranian texts, except a few scattered passages and sometimes a group of stanzas (probably remnants of the *Ṛigveda* tradition guarded with much less anxious care), is on the whole pre-eminently and nobly ethical. For this reason, the abstract deities of the *Ṛigveda* are not adequate parallels of their Iranian counterparts. The deified Manyu, Aramati, Asunīti, etc., are much more concrete and matter-of-fact than any of the Iranian deities. Even where the names are almost identical it seems safer to assume that the words were Indo-Iranian, but the deification was the work of the two peoples, separately and independently carried on. It seems quite clear from the *Ṛigveda* that such personification of abstract nouns cannot be referred back to the Indo-Iranian period. At any rate we find it impossible to believe that the existence of a god or a goddess in the I.I. period is conclusively proved by the mere fact that there is a god or goddess with the same name among both the branches of the Indo-Iranians. It is certainly possible that, although the name belongs to the common period, the deification took place only subsequently to the separation.

### 3. *Indo-Iranian Gods and Conceptions*

In addition to the old I.E. word *deiwos* 'gods', I.I. *daiva*, we have the Sk. word *asura* = Av. *ahuro* meaning 'lord'.

offer to the Vedic concepts are many, but equally so are the contrasts. The resemblance is great, but the difference is still greater.'—Dhalla, ZT., p. 4.

*Asura*, which may have been the Indo-Iranian form of the word, is commonly derived from the I.E. word *ásu*—'the breath of life', whence in the Anglo-Saxon we have *ésé*, 'elves', i.e. 'spirits'.[1] The two words *daiva* and *asura* however meet with altogether different treatments among the two branches of the Indo-Iranians. The Iranians call their highest god Ahura, and take Daivas to mean 'demons', while the Indians keep the latter (*devas*) as the common designation of a god, but take *asuras* to mean 'demons'.

This change in the meaning is sometimes explained by saying that there took place among the Indo-Iranians a religious schism, the Indo-Iranian community being then divided into two hostile camps, viz. the *daeva*-party and the *asura*-party, and that the latter drove out the former from their common home. This, however, as has been remarked above, does not appear very probable. If there ever existed any such hostile parties, it was not until the rise of Zoroastrian reforms. We agree with Professor Moulton in saying that the more natural explanation of the fact that the Av. *daeva* means 'demon' is that it was due to Zoroaster denouncing the older nature gods as evil powers,[2] and the fact that the Sk. *asuras* came to mean 'demons' is to be explained independently.

L. H. Mills conjectures that the change of meaning in the word *asura* in India and *daeva* in Iran was due to 'some series of calamities following upon the especial use of the name in hymns, and on account of the name abounding in the battle hymns of their enemies in tribal wars';[3] but this appears quite improbable. The word *asura*, first of all, was not the name of any god but an epithet, and as such it could not have been regarded as inauspicious, without affecting the character of the gods to whom it was particularly applied. But in the Vedic literature neither Dyaus

[1] Moulton, ERPP., p. 34.
[2] ibid., p. 55.
[3] *An Exposition of the Lore of the Avesta*, Bombay, 1916, p. 61.

nor Varuṇa nor any other god to whom it is applied is considered to be in any way an evil deity.

We have already seen that the word *bhaga* belongs to the I.E. period, as another common word for god in general, meaning 'distributor', 'dispenser'. This is further supported by the fact that on the inscriptions of the Achaemenian kings heavenly beings are still spoken of as *baghas*.[1] This older use of the term is again retained in the *Avesta*. Thus, Ahura Mazda is himself called a *bagha*,[2] while in the Old Persian inscriptions he is said to be the greatest of all *bagas* (=Av. *baghas*). Mithra also is expressly mentioned as a *baga*.[3] In the *Ṛigveda* on the other hand, *bhaga* becomes an independent god, and loses its former sense of god in general.

(*a*) *Ahura Mazda as the Sky-god.*

Ahura Mazda, 'the Wise Lord', the greatest god of the Iranians, is pre-eminently an ethical figure. But some naturalistic characteristics are also found. He first filled the heavenly realms with light; with his shining eye he observes all things and assigns to all good creatures their respective places and activities. He clothes himself with the sky,[4] brings forth the rivers and forests, gives swiftness to wind and cloud, fixes the course of the sun and the stars, and causes the moon to wax and wane.[5] But above all he is a great creator of good things. He himself declares to Zoroaster: 'I created the stars, the moon, the sun, the red burning fire, the dogs, the birds and the five kinds of animals; but better and greater than all . . . . the right man.'[6] Ahura Mazda again is the course of light and darkness, sleep and waking, morning, noon, night and the seasons, as well as kine, water and plants.[7] It is he who made the aerial way, made the earth and everything that

1 Dhalla, ZT., p. 153; Moulton, EZ., p. 51f.
2 *Yasna*, X. 10; LXX. 1.
3 Yt., X. 141.
4 *Yasna*, XXX. 5; see also, Yt., XIII. 3.
5 *Yasna*, XLIV. 3ff.
6 Aogemaidé, 29-30; SBE., IV, p. 376.
7 *Yasna*, XXXVII. 1.

grows or rises.[1] He is the guardian of the 'Righteous Order' and cannot be deceived.[2] Nor does he sleep, but observes all human deeds, overt or covert, the all-viewing lord.[3]

With this description, the description of Varuṇa in the *Ṛigveda* is in striking resemblance. Just as the great Iranian god is called the Ahura (Lord) so is Varuṇa often called Asura, words undoubtedly meaning the same thing and going back to the Indo-Iranian period. Varuṇa again is said to be the supporter of the heaven, earth and air;[4] by Varuṇa's law, the heaven and earth are held apart.[5] He made a wide path for the sun and made him shine in heaven.[6] He placed fire in the waters, the sun in the sky, *soma* on the rock.[7] By Varuṇa's ordinances (*vratāni*) the moon shining brightly moves at night and the stars placed on high are seen at night but disappear by day.[8] Varuṇa too is far-seeing[9] and omniscient. He knows all secret things that have been or shall be done and witnesses men's truth and falsehood.[10] Varuṇa is surrounded by spies, who are wise and cannot be deceived.[11] The sovereign power is said to belong to Ahura Mazda and he is called the absolute[12] ruler. The attribute of sovereignty is in the *Ṛigveda* applied to Varuṇa also. He is thus called the self-dependent ruler and the king of the whole world.[13]

Moral sovereignty is, however, still more peculiar to these two gods. Both are the guardians of the righteous order in an especial degree. This conception of an universal order, which in the words of Bloomfield 'dignifies alike *Veda* and *Avesta*',[14] appears to have been as old as the Indo-Iranian period. In the *Ṛigveda* it is called *ṛta*, in the Avestan *asha* (*areta*) and in cuneiform Persian *arta*.[15] Both

[1] *Vend.*, XXI. 4, 8, 12, 16; cf. V. 15ff. [2] *Yasna*, XLIII. 6.
[3] *Yasna*, XXXI. 13; XLV. 4; *Vend.*, XIX. 20; cf. Dhalla, ZT., p. 83; Bloomfield, RV., pp. 120ff.
[4] RV., V. 69. 1, 4. [5] RV., VI. 70-1. [6] RV., VII. 87. 1, 5.
[7] RV., V. 85. 2. [8] RV., I. 24. 10. [9] RV., VIII. 90. 2.
[10] RV., I. 25. 9, 11; VII. 49. 3. [11] RV., I. 24. 13; VII. 67. 5.
[12] *Yasna*, XXVII. 1; XXI. 3. [13] RV., II. 28. 1; V. 85. 3.
[14] Bloomfield, RV., p. 125. [15] ibid.

Ahura Mazda and Varuṇa are described as the 'Spring of the *ṛta*', or righteousness. Ahura Mazda is *ashahe khāo*;[1] Varuṇa is *khā ṛtasya*.[2] 'The words are sound for sound the same....this is unquestionably the best conception that has been elaborated by the Aryans (Indo-Iranians).'[3]

Further, just as the Vedic Varuṇa is associated with Mitra, so is the Avestan Ahura with Mithra. Mitra and Varuṇa are invoked together in a number of Ṛigvedic hymns, and in the *Avesta* we find the words: 'We sacrifice to Mithra and Ahura, the two great imperishable holy gods.'[4] Mitra and Varuṇa are again found together on the Boghaz-köi inscriptions.[5] With these two gods the *Ṛigveda* also associates the *āditya* Aryaman, a god who corresponds with the Iranian Airyama and therefore appears to have been an Indo-Iranian creation.

All these considerations have been taken to mean that the god Ahura Mazda was derived from the Indo-Iranian god Varuṇa. Thus Bloomfield remarks: 'In common with most scholars I believe that the god Varuṇa is to be connected, if not identified, with the chief and wise Zoroastrian god, Ahura Mazda.'[6] According to Professor Moulton Mazdah was merely a cultic epithet of Ahura Mazda, who, in an earlier form, was in existence long before Zoroaster as a chief god of the pantheon and who was at least in power the Iranian counterpart of the Vedic Varuṇa.[7]

Professor Gray[8] has, however, advanced the hypothesis that Ormazd was not an Iranian Varuṇa but the equivalent of the Vedic Dyaus himself, and that he was the sky-god pure and simple. 'Ormazd was', adds

1 RV., II. 28. 5. 2 *Yasna*, X. 4.

3 Bloomfield, RV., p. 126. 4 Yt., X. 145.

5 See Griswold, RV., p. 116f. With regard to the identity of Mithra-Ahura and Mitra-Varuṇa, Bloomfield says: 'It seems to me an unimaginable feat of scepticism to doubt the original identity of the two pairs.'—RV., p. 121.

6 RV., p. 120; see also Darmesteter, SBE., IV, pp. lii, lxiv; and references given in Macdonell, VM., p. 29, n. 20.

7 Moulton, EZ., pp. 29ff.

8 *Ratanbāi Kātrak Lectures* delivered at Oxford.

Professor Gray, 'the Ahura (Lord) and was further honoured by the epithet Mazdah (wise), these two titles supplanting his original name and aiding his evolution, as his earlier celestial functions were forgotten, into practically a new divine being of predominantly ethical character.' He is also of the opinion that the term Ahura Mazda may have supplanted the deity's true name, probably because it had become so sacrosanct as to be practically taboo.

None the less Ahura Mazda, as he appears in the oldest part of the *Avesta*, does not convincingly appear to have been a sky-god proper.[1] That he should be described in almost the same terms as Varuṇa is natural. Even in the Indo-Iranian period Varuṇa was probably the only important moral deity, and Ahura Mazda, who was the author of good creation and the righteous order and therefore essentially moral, was naturally and inevitably described in the same terms. The most radical reaction cannot completely disassociate itself from current conceptions. And at the same time the gods of the older pantheon appear to have been so abhorrent to Zoroaster and his followers, that taking over of even the loftiest from among them was impossible.

Some further considerations for not regarding Ahura Mazda as a sky-god belonging to the Indo-Iranian period are:

(1) anthropomorphic traits are almost entirely absent.[2] Ahura Mazda is essentially a spirit,[3] a notion which has no parallel in the *Ṛigveda*;

(2) many if not most of his so called naturalistic epithets are merely figurative expressions, such as may be applied to any supreme being;[4]

(3) his association with Mithra may have belonged to

[1] See Spiegel, AP., pp. 128-34; *Eränische Altertumskunde*, Leipzig, 1878, II, pp. 141, 190; C. de. Harlez, *Introduction to the Avesta*, p. 135.

[2] Dhalla, ZT., p. 84.

[3] ibid., p. 20.

[4] ibid., p. 84; Harlez, loc. cit.

a period when the older nature-worship was reviving, since Mithra is not mentioned in the Gāthās.[1]

But whether Ahura Mazda was originally a god of the material sky or not, or whether he was purely a creation of Zoroastrian reform, it is probable enough that the Indo-Iranians worshipped a god of the shining sky, who was called Dyaus, and probably also a god of the encompassing sky under the name Varuṇa. 'It is the custom of Persians', reports Herodotus, 'to ascend to the highest peaks of the mountains, and offer sacrifices to Zeus, calling the whole vault of the sky Zeus.'[2] This Zeus of Herodotus was probably the Indo-Iranian Dyaus.[3]

Besides the sky-god, Herodotus mentions Sun, Moon, Earth, Fire, Water and Winds as gods to whom also the Persians offered sacrifices, adding that 'from the beginning they have sacrificed to these alone'. This statement of Herodotus appears to be more true of the Iranians of a few centuries before the time of Herodotus, than of those of his own time. This is made probable by what we found may have existed in the I.E. period. A stronger confirmation of the view is, however, to be found in the religion of the *Ṛigveda*, the principal gods of which are the deified phenomena of nature.[4] We will now attempt to trace the powers and functions of the Indo-Iranian nature-gods.

With regard to the sky-god, although its existence in the Indo-Iranian period is probable, we have hardly any more information. Both Dyaus and Varuṇa are found in the *Ṛigveda*, but in the *Avesta* we can discover nothing of any importance about them.

[1] Griswold, RV., p. 115, n. 2; nor is Airyaman to be found in the Gāthās: cf. SBE., L, and Index to XXXI. For more criticism see Harlez, op. cit., pp. 135-6.

[2] i. 131.

[3] See Moulton, EZ., p. 391, n. 3.

[4] Moulton, ERPP., pp. 35ff; EZ., p. 393, n. 1, etc.; E. Edwards, 'God (Iranian)', ERE., VI, p. 290f.

(*b*) *Sun-gods.*

Among the sun-gods we have to consider three: Vedic Sūrya = Av. Hvar, Vedic Mitra = Av. Mithra, and Vedic Bhaga = Av. Bagha (Pers. Baga).

(1) *Sūrya-Hvar.*—Of these only Sūrya-Hvar can be regarded as an I.I. sun-god with any certainty. In the *Avesta*, Hvarekhshaeta,[1] who is both the god of the shining sun and the genius presiding over him, is often described as bright, undying, shining and swift-horsed.[2] When the sun rises the creation of Ahura Mazda becomes clean. If the sun were not to rise, the Daevas, becoming irresistible to the heavenly Yazatas, would destroy everything. He who sacrifices to the sun to withstand darkness, the Daevas born of darkness, the robbers and bandits, the Yātus and Pairikas, as well as death that creeps in unseen, delights all the heavenly and worldly Yazatas.[3] The sun is also called the eye of Ahura Mazda.[4] In the *Ṛigveda*, Sūrya of adorable light rouses all men as he rises.[5] Agni had established the brightness in the Sun,[6] and Sūrya's car is said to be drawn by seven swift mares.[7] He shines for all the world, and dispelling darkness, with his light, he triumphs over creatures of darkness and witches.[8] He is also called the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa,[9] as well as of Agni.[10]

(2) *Mitra-Mithra.*—Whether this divinity can be regarded as an I.I. sun-god is doubtful. The original character of the Vedic Mitra is obscure, but probably he is to be taken as a solar deity. This conjecture is to a certain extent supported by the fact that the Avestan Mithra was, even from the earliest times, intimately connected with the sun, although the opinion that he was originally a sun-god

1 Dhalla, ZT., p. 126f; see also, Macdonell, VM., pp. 31-2; Harlez, op. cit., pp. 154-5.

2 *Khôrshēd Nyāyiś*, 6 etc.; Yt., VI. 1, etc.

3 Yt., VI. 2-4; SBE., XXIII, p. 86.

4 Spiegel, AP., pp. 190-1.

5 RV., X. 7. 3; VII. 63. 2-4.

6 RV., X. 3. 2.

7 RV., IV. 13. 3.

8 RV., VII. 63. 1; I. 191. 8, 9.

9 RV., VII. 66. 10.

10 RV., I. 115. 1.

proper is no longer held. Both Moulton[1] and Harlez[2] regard him rather as the god of the luminous ether; and Edwards[3] is inclined to take this as the best opinion.[4] Mithra precedes the rising sun as the herald of the dawn and traverses the world after sunset surveying all that is between the earth and the heavens.[5] He is also described as having piercing rays, and ten thousand eyes.[6] The lord of wide pastures (*vourugaoyaoiti*)[7] and countries (*dainghu-paiti*),[8] he grants a happy and a good dwelling to the Aryan nations, as well as help, joy, health and victory.[9]

There is only one hymn of the *Ṛigveda* in which Mitra is invoked alone.[10] Here, as in some other passages, he is said to bring men together by uttering his voice (*bṛvāṇaḥ*).[11] He is also called the great Āditya who brings men together;[12] while in the *Avesta* Mithra is the special guardian of oaths and promises. The crime of violating a contract is called '*Mithra-druj*' (deceiving Mithra).[13] Mithra punishes this crime severely and is the inveterate foe of falsehood.[14] The Iranian Mithra may be regarded as a *Sondergott*, 'he of the compact' (or rather 'contract') as Dr. Griswold[15] takes it; but it is impossible to concede that this was an Indo-Iranian notion. In that period Mitra-Mithra, a genius of heavenly light and foe of darkness, may have been regarded as a friend of mankind, and therefore as a god who supervised human friendship. And since friendship should be true, he became a guardian of truthfulness.

The etymology of both the words is uncertain. Professor Gray has recently derived them from *mā* 'to measure'.

[1] ERPP., p. 36f. [2] op. cit., p. 150.
[3] ERE., VI, p. 291[a]; but see Spiegel, AP., p. 183.
[4] cf. Moulton, ERPP., p. 47. [5] Yt., X. 13; 95.
[6] Yt., XXIII. 6; XXIV. 4; X. 7; cf. RV., III. 59. 1, where Mitra is said to watch the tillers with unwinking eyes; and Yt., X. 15, where the powerful Mithra is said to look with a health-bringing eye.
[7] Yt., X. 1. [8] Dhalla, ZT., p. 106.
[9] Yt., X. 4-5. [10] RV., III. 59.
[11] RV., III. 59. 1; VII. 36. 2; cf. V. 72. 2.
[12] RV., III. 59. 5. [13] Dhalla, ZT., p. 108.
[14] ibid., p. 106f. [15] RV., p. 116 and n. 3.

Mitra-Mithra was, he thinks, first conceived as the measurer of the day. It is also derived from *mith* 'to meet', 'to agree' or *mid* 'to love'.[1]

(3) *Bhaga-Baga.*—Bhaga-Baga, as we have already seen, was probably a common designation of the gods in general. But the available evidence does not warrant any definite conclusion as to whether there existed an I.I. deity of this name.

(*c*) *Moon and Earth.*

By the side of the sun, the moon, and by the side of the sky, the earth, may have continued to be worshipped since I.E. times, but even here our information is scanty. The Avestan Āramaiti is undoubtedly the same word as the Vedic Aramati, but whether Āramaiti-Aramati was the goddess of earth in the Indo-Iranian period is doubtful.[2] Although Sāyaṇa explains *aramati* by the word *bhūmi* (earth),[3] Aramati in the *Ṛigveda* is a personification of piety or devotion and does not appear to have any connexion with the earth. The Avestan Āramaiti on the other hand is a genius of the earth and of wisdom.[4]

(*d*) *Fire-gods.*

Both the branches of the Indo-Iranians have a fire-god: Vedic Agni, Avestan Ātar. In uncivilized communities the fire-deity 'is generally a vaguely envisaged *daimon*', while 'in all cultures the fire-god proper appears to be an exception, and not a regular member of the pantheon. The history of religion practically includes only two genuine fire-gods—Agni of Hinduism and Atar of Zoroastrianism'.[5]

The two conceptions connected with the fire-gods which can with some certainty be traced back to the I.I. period are: (*i*) *the fire-god*, who was already regarded as an intermediary

[1] Harlez, op. cit., p. 154. [2] Macdonell, VM., p. 119f.

[3] On RV., VII. 36. 8; VIII. 42. 3.

[4] See Moulton, ERPP., p. 36; EZ., p. 10, n. 2; ERE., VII, p. 419b; Edwards, ERE., VI, p. 291a; Spiegel, AP., pp. 198-203; Dhalla, ZT., pp. 37-9.

[5] A. E. Crawley, 'Fire, Fire-Gods', ERE., VI, p. 28.

between the gods and men. This fact is well known about the Vedic Agni, and although the Iranians did not as yet offer sacrifices in fire as reported by Herodotus,[1] fire appears even then to have been regarded as a messenger who called the gods down to the spot where the sacrificial food was offered;[2] and (*ii*) the *house-fire*, which was already regarded as sacred. Thus Ātar is called 'the house-lord of all houses'[3] and Agni 'the lord of the house' (*gṛhapati*) or 'domestic' (*damūnas*).[4]

It is possible to find other points of similarity between the two gods, but these do not reveal sure Indo-Iranian traits. For example, the fact that Ātar is called the son of Ahura Mazda[5] and Agni that of Dyaus,[6] or the correspondence between the three Vedic fires and the somewhat doubtful three fires of the *Avesta*,[7] are susceptible of independent explanation.

With the fire-cult there also appears to have existed a special class of priests (Vedic *atharvan*, Av. *atharvan*, probably to be derived from Av. *ātar* 'fire'),[8] whose principal duty was to attend to the sacred fire. There is no reason to believe that this or any other class of priests was altogether hereditary, or to assume any hard and fast divisions among the Indo-Iranians.[9] The very existence of the words *atharvan* and *athravan*, however, points to an advanced form of the fire-cult. Professor Macdonell may therefore be right in concluding that 'in the Indo-Iranian period the sacrificial fire was already the centre of a developed ritual, tended by a priestly class and personified and worshipped as a wise, beneficent and friendly power'.[10]

1 i. 132.
2 Moulton, ERPP., pp. 38-9; EZ., p. 70; see also Dhalla, ZT., pp. 134-5.
3 *Yasna*, XVII. 11.
4 RV., VII. 15. 2; III. 1. 5; Griswold, RV., p. 154.
5 *Yasna*, LXII. 6 RV., IV. 15. 6; X. 45. 8, etc.
7 See Griswold, RV., p. 152.
8 Edwards, 'Priest, Priesthood (Iranian)', ERE., X, p. 319b. Compare with this Latin *atrim*, the 'room containing the hearth'.—Moulton, EZ., p. 70. 9 Edwards, op. cit., pp. 319b-20a.
10 Macdonell, VM., p. 99; see also Oldenberg, RV., p. 103.

In the *Ṛigveda* we find the god Narāśaṁsa who is the performer of the sacrifice,[1] and who is said to come at the head of the gods and make the sacrifice pleasant to them.[2] The name means 'the praise of men', and is probably to be taken in the sense of 'he who is the object of men's praise'.[3] The word also occurs as an epithet, more particularly of Agni. This god belongs to the Indo-Iranian period at least in name; for we have in the *Avesta*, an angel called Nairyôśangha, a name which also signifies 'prayer' or 'praise of men'. He appears as the messenger of Ahura Mazda[4] and is the associate of Ātar.[5] Harlez regards him as a 'personification of the flame rising from the altar and carrying to Heaven the prayer of the faithful'.[6]

(*e*) *Apām Napāt.*

The Avestan Apām Napāt is a male spirit presiding over the water, while his Vedic counterpart[7] has both an aqueous and an igneous character. The Sanskrit *apām napāt* means the 'son of waters', and the same may have been the meaning of the Avestan word. But while the Vedic god becomes almost completely identified with Agni, the Avestan Apām Napāt is found as the name of a mountain. Various views have been put forward to explain the original character of this god,[8] but it is not easy to say which one of them is correct. Harlez therefore suggests that 'the best course is to refrain from a definite expression of opinion'.[9]

(*f*) *Wind.*

The two wind gods of the *Ṛigveda*, viz. Vāyu and Vāta (Av. Vāyu and Vāta), go back to the Indo-Iranian period. In the *Ṛigveda* Vāyu is said to have a shining car with a golden seat,[10] with which he touches the sky. In the *Avesta*

[1] RV., I. 13. 3; 18. 9; V. 5. 2. [2] RV., X. 70. 2.
[3] Macdonell, VM., p. 100; see Carnoy, *Iranian Mythology*, p. 285.
[4] *Vend.*, XIX. 34; XXII. 7. see Carnoy, loc. cit.
[5] Dhalla, ZT., p. 137. [6] op. cit., p. 149.
[7] RV., II. 35. [8] See Macdonell, VM., p. 70.
[9] Harlez, op. cit., p. 167. [10] IV. 48. 4; 46. 2–4.

he has not only a golden chariot, but many other things belonging to him are made of gold, such as his helmet, crown, garment, weapons, etc.[1] In the *Ṛigveda* Vāyu is chiefly the god, the personification being slightly more advanced, and Vāta is the element. This may be regarded as the case even in the Indo-Iranian period.[2]

(*g*) *Other Divinities.*

In addition to the personifications of the natural phenomena mentioned by Herodotus, we have the following divinities which may have been as old as the I.E. period.

(1) *Aryaman-Airyaman.*—The Vedic god Aryaman has an Avestan counterpart in Airyaman, and these two gods agree both in name and in character. In the *Ṛigveda* the word *aryaman* is sometimes used in appellative senses of 'comrade' and 'groomsman', which senses, Professor Macdonell remarks, 'are occasionally connected also with the god'.[3] Thus, Agni is called *aryaman*, when wooing maidens.[4] We have also the derivative *aryamya* which corresponds with *mitrya*, both meaning 'relating to a friend'.[5] The Av. *airyaman* also, on the authority of Professor Moulton, means a 'friend' in the *Gāthās*.[6] In a passage of the *Avesta*[7] which Mills considers to be very old,[8] Airyaman is called the desired friend and peersman and is prayed to draw near for grace to the men and to the women. This god therefore appears to go back to the Indo-Iranian period and appears even then to have conveyed the idea of comradeship.[9] His character as a guardian of health and banisher of sickness and disease, found in other parts of the *Avesta*, is probably a later Iranian development.[10]

[1] Yt., XV. 57.

[2] Macdonell, VM., p. 81; see Dhalla, ZT., pp. 132–4. According to Harlez, op. cit., pp. 158-9, Vāta, in the *Avesta*, is the wind and Vāyu the air, and the personification of the former is very imperfect. He even regards Vāta as existing in no definite form.

[3] Macdonell, VM., p. 45.

[4] RV., V. 3. 2.

[5] Macdonell, VM., p. 45.

[6] EZ., p. 117.

[7] *Yasna*, LIV. 1.

[8] SBE., XXXI, p. 293, n. 2.

[9] Dhalla, ZT., p. 119.

[10] ibid.

(2) *Vṛtrahan-Verethraghna.*—The word *vṛtrahan*, meaning the 'slayer of the demon Vṛtra', occurs in the *Ṛigveda* chiefly as an epithet of Indra, while the Avestan Verethraghna is the genius of victory. Moulton thinks that Lehmann is wrong in assuming that the word *vṛtraghan* was more primitive and that its primitive sense was lost in Iran. In Moulton's opinion, the word *verethraghna* (=victory), to be derived from an adjective meaning 'assault-repelling, victorious', was the more primitive, and its use as an epithet applied to Indra and meaning the 'slayer of Vṛtra' was a piece of 'imaginative etymology'.[1] Harlez,[2] after a more detailed discussion, comes to the same conclusion as Moulton.

(3) *Soma-Haoma.*—The existence of the Sauma-cult[3] is one of the best established facts of the Indo-Iranian religion. Among both the Vedic Indians and the early Iranians there existed the practice of drinking the *sauma* juice and offering it to the gods. At the same time the plant itself was deified, although, even in the *Ṛigveda* anthropomorphism was not much advanced.

The powers of the god and the properties of the juice are somewhat similarly described in both literatures. In both the god is said to be the lord of plants,[4] who keeps death away and bestows immortality.[5] Both gods are again light-winning[6] (Skr. *ávasā* = Av. *hvaresa*) and wise (*sukratu* = *hukratu*); both have their mythical home in heaven and both as mighty gods are called kings.

As Soma is *vṛtrahan*, so Haoma is *verethrajan*.[7] The plant

1 Moulton, ERPP., pp. 39-40, referring to Bartholomae, AIW., s.v. *vereθra*='Angriff', and Professor E. V. Arnold's remark: 'Indra appears to have stolen his title of Vṛtraghna from some earlier god or gods'.—ibid., p. 40 n. See also EZ., p. 69.

2 op. cit., pp. 159–63.

3 The I.I. form of the word assumed by Moulton, ERPP., p. 41.

4 RV., I. 91. 22; IX. 97, 98-9; 114. 2; Dhalla, ZT., p. 122; Macdonell, VM., p. 113.

5 *Yasna*, IX. 2, 19, etc.; RV. IX. 113. 7, 8. 6 RV., VIII. 48. 15.

7 Macdonell, VM., p. 114; see Harlez, op. cit., pp. 161–3.

is said to grow on mountains as well as in waters.[1] In the *Ṛigveda* Varuṇa places it on the rock, in the *Avesta* it is placed on the great mountain Haraiti by a skilful god.[2] In the *Avesta* Haoma is called the healer and is beseeched for long vitality of life;[3] while in the *Ṛigveda soma* heals whatever is sick and bestows long life in this world.[4] In the *Avesta*, the bounteous birds are said to have carried Haoma to the Peaks-above-the-eagles, to mountain summits,[5] while in the *Ṛigveda*, the eagle is said to have brought *soma* to Indra,[6] and the swiftest eagle is said to have flown to the *soma* plant.[7]

Soma is the victor, the most heroic of heroes who was born for battle;[8] Haoma, the bestower of victory on earth as well as in battles. Haoma is besought to smash the wicked who torment mankind.[9] The *soma* draught is even said 'to dispel sin from the heart, to destroy falsehood and to promote truth'.[10] So is Haoma said to be most nutritious for the soul and, overwhelming the assaults of death, it is said to conquer life.[11]

Besides this common deification, great importance was attached to the pressing of the juice. The word for pressing in both the languages is the same: Sk. *su* becoming *hu* in the *Avestan*, due to the pronunciation of *s* as *h*. In both rituals again, it was the practice to press the stalks (Sk. *aṁśu* = Av. *āsu*) after washing them, to filter the juice through a sieve and to mix this purified yellow juice with milk;[12] but while according to the *Ṛigveda* there are three pressings,[13] according to the *Avesta* there are only two.[14] The two texts also agree in giving the names of the ancient preparers of

[1] RV., IX. 46. 1; 85. 10; 89. 2; 97. 41; *Yasna*, X. 3, 4; Macdonell, VM., p. 113.
[2] *Yasna*, X. 10.
[3] *Yasna*, X. 9; IX. 19.
[4] RV., VIII. 68. 2; X. 25. 11; I. 91. 6.
[5] *Yasna*, X. 11.
[6] RV., III. 43. 7.
[7] RV., V. 45. 9.
[8] RV., I. 91. 21; IX. 66. 16-7.
[9] *Yasna*, IX. 30ff.
[10] Macdonell, VM., p. 109.
[11] *Yasna*, IX. 16, 20.
[12] *Yasna*, X. 13.
[13] Macdonell, VM., p. 114.
[14] *Yasna*, X. 2.

*soma*. The *Ṛigveda* mentions Vivasvat and Trita Aptya, while the *Avesta*, Vīvaṅhvant, Thrita and Āthwya.[1]

(4) *Trita-Thrita*.[2]—In the *Avesta* Trita appears as one of the first priests who prepared Haoma.[3] It was probably because of this (since the Haoma was reputed to possess healing qualities) that he was regarded as the first healer.[4] Ahura Mazda is said to have brought down to him from heaven ten thousand healing plants that had been growing up around the white Haoma.[5] The functions of Trita are sometimes ascribed to Thraêtaona, who is therefore called the inventor of medicine.[6] Thraêtaona, however, is also the inventor of magic and the slayer of Azi Dahāka, the three-mouthed, three-headed, six-eyed demon.[7]

Corresponding to this we have a Trita in the *Ṛigveda*, who is also a preparer of *soma*.[8] Soma is said to be purified by Trita.[9] He is said to urge with his ten maidens (the fingers) the tawny drops with the pressing stones for Indra to drink.[10] Trita also slew the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭṛ, released the cows and smote the fences of Vala.[11] In the *Ṛigveda* Āptya is the standing epithet of Trita,[12] while in the *Avesta* Thraêtaona is called the heir of the valiant Āthwya clan.[13]

(5) *Vivasvat-Vīvaṅhvant*.—The Vedic Vivasvat appears to be a sun-god, while the Avestan Vīvaṅhvant was the first preparer of Haoma. But even Vivasvat is not unconnected with Soma. Thus Soma is said to have been cleansed by

1 Macdonell, VM., p. 114 and references given on p. 115, n.; see also, Carnoy, *Iranian Mythology*, pp. 282-3. On Soma-Haoma generally see also, Dhalla, ZT., pp. 119-22; Bloomfield, RV., pp. 145-7; Harlez, op. cit., pp. 168-72; Moulton, EZ., pp. 71-3; Oldenberg, RV., pp. 176-8; Griswold, RV., pp. 209-10, 218f., etc.

2 cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 69.

3 *Yasna*, IX. 7.

4 *Vend.*, XX. cf. SBE., IV, p. 225f.

5 *Vend.*, XX. 4.

6 Westergaard's Fragments, ii, SBE., IV, pp. 245-6.

7 Yt., V. 60. 34; *Yasna*, IX. 8.

8 RV., II. 11, 20.

9 RV., IX. 34. 4.

10 IX. 32. 2; 38. 2; Macdonell, VM., p. 67.

11 RV., X. 8. 8; I. 52. 4, 5; cf. X. 99. 6.

12 RV., V. 41, etc.

13 Yt., V. 34; *Yasna*, IX. 7-8.

Vivasvat's daughters (i.e. the fingers).[1] Soma dwells with Vivasvat,[2] and the streams of *soma* juice flow through the sieve after being blessed by Vivasvat.[3] Vivasvat urges the tawny *soma* to flow.[4] And just as Vīvaṅhvant is the father of Yima,[5] Vivasvat is the father of Yama and Manu,[6] the progenitors of mankind. From these common characteristics Oldenberg thought that this divinity originally represented not the sun but simply the first sacrificer, the ancestor of the human race.[7] So far as the Indo-Iranian conception of this deity is concerned, there is nothing improbable in this view.[8]

(6) *Yama-Yima.*—Along with the Vedic Vivasvat, his son Yama also goes back to the Indo-Iranian period.

When Vīvaṅhvant, the first of men, prepared Haoma, a son Yima, called the brilliant, was born to him. 'He by his authority, made both herds and people free from dying, plants and waters free from drought, and men could eat imperishable food. In the reign of Yima there existed neither cold nor heat, neither age nor death, nor envy demon-made.'[9] Yama, the son of Vivasvat, is also a king,[10] although also a god by implication;[11] but unlike Yima, the worldly king of a golden age, he is the ruler of the dead,[12] living in the highest heaven.[13] This 'important discrepancy' between the two legends is attributed by Carnoy[14] to the fact that the Iranians had another legend for the first man: the story of Gaya Maretan.

Carnoy gives the following as points of similarity in the two stories: 'Just as Yima's *vara* is concealed either on a mountain or in some recess where sun and moon are not

1 RV., IX. 14. 5.
2 RV., IX. 26. 4.
3 RV., IX. 10. 5.
4 RV., IX. 99. 2.
5 *Yasna*, IX. 4.
6 RV., X. 14. 5; 17. 1; Vāl., IV. 1.
7 Oldenberg, RV., p. 122.
8 For other views see Macdonell, VM., p. 43 and references.
9 *Yasna*, IX. 4-5; SBE., XXXI, p. 232.
10 RV., IX., 113. 8; X. 14 passim.
11 RV., X., 51. 1; 64. 3; 92. 11.
12 RV., X. 16. 9.
13 RV., X. 14. 8.
14 *Iranian Mythology*, p. 313.

seen, Yama's dwelling is in the remote part of the sky. While Yima calls a gathering of men to assemble them in his *vara*, Yama collects the people and gives the dead a resting-place. Yima has opened the earth for mankind; Yama is "lord of the settlement" (*viśpati*) and "father". Yima has found new countries, following a road toward the sun; Yama has a path for the dead to lead them to their abode, being the first to die and having discovered "a way for many". A bird brings messages into Yima's *vara*; Yama has the owl or the pigeon as his envoy.'[1] To this may be added the fact that in the *Avesta* Yima is said to be the first of mortals, while in the *Atharvaveda* Yama was the first of mortals who died.[2]

All these points of similarity, however, are to be taken collectively and not individually, since some slight discrepancy is present in almost every one of them. Thus for instance, the *vara* of Yima appears to have been underground,[3] while the dwelling of Yama, at least in the *Ṛigveda*, is in the sky.[4] There is, however, one more feature in the two stories which shows very close resemblance. Just as Yima had a twin sister Yimak in the *Avesta*, so Yama had Yamī in the *Ṛigveda*, and the belief in their incest appears to have already existed, since in the *Ṛigveda* an attempt to clear Yama of this guilt is found.[5]

What was the original character of Yima or Yama is very doubtful. Some think he was first conceived as a man,[6] others that he represented some natural phenomenon, such as fire,[7] the sun,[8] the moon,[9] or the setting sun.[10] He might

[1] ibid., p. 312; see *Vend.*, II; RV., X. 14, 135, 154; Macdonell, VM., pp. 171–3.
[2] Av., XVIII. 3; 13. [3] cf. SBE., IV, p. 20, n. 1.
[4] RV., IX. 113. 8; X. 14. 8.
[5] Carnoy, *Iranian Mythology*, pp. 310-11; Macdonell, VM., p. 173.
[6] Roth, ZDMG., IV, pp. 425ff; Hopkins, PAOS., 1881, May; cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 174, n. 30.
[7] Bergaigne, RV., I, p. 89. [8] Barth, RI., p. 22f.
[9] Hillebrandt, VM., I, pp. 394ff; Hardy, VBP., p. 43.
[10] Müller, AR., pp. 297-8; Carnoy, op. cit., p. 313.

have had some natural substratum in the beginning, but this appears to have been lost sight of even as early as the Indo-Iranian period. He was then, probably, the first ancestor of the human race and king of mankind.

(7) Lastly there are two goddesses who go back to this period: viz. the goddess of dawn (Vedic *Uṣas*, Av. *Ushah*) and the goddess of Plenty (Vedic *Puraṁdhi*, Av. Parendi). But hardly anything more can be said with certainty. The poetical form in which Uṣas appears in the *Ṛigveda*, however, may have been purely an Indian creation.

(8) As the words Vedic *druh*=Av. *druj* (an 'evil spirit') and Vedic *yātu*=Av. *yatu* (a 'demon') show, there also existed certain demons who were feared and for whose destruction the Indo-Iranians prayed to the gods.

### 4. *Indo-Iranian Worship*

Thus the nature-gods of the preceding period were now more clearly conceived of, and their favour was sought by offering gifts as well as animal and *soma* sacrifices. In the beginning these may have been accompanied by some such simple formulas as, 'O God, I offer thee this so that thou mayst give me that, and be gracious'. With the development of language, however, the gift may have been offered with some sort of description of the powers and functions of the god to whom it was presented. This description, as time went on, grew into praises of the beneficial aspect of the heavenly phenomena, leading ultimately to the composition of hymns. With these compositions extolling the great deeds of the gods[1] may have also come about the bardic praises of the chiefs and leaders of the community. The chiefs and leaders then gave rewards to the composers and the singers.

The things that were dear to mortals were also dear to gods. Men liked food and so did the gods. They liked and

[1] Vedic *stu*=Av. *stu* 'to praise'; *stotar*=*staotar*, 'a singer'; *stoma*=*staoma*, 'a hymn of praise'.

ate the flesh of some animals and not of others; and they offered it to the gods because the gods also liked and enjoyed the same. The *soma*-juice stimulated and exhilarated human beings; so, it was believed, it did the gods. Guardians of men liked their praises being sung before them. They even liked them more than material gifts, because they were not in great want of the latter. This again was reflected in men's behaviour towards the gods, the guardians of the world. Gifts and sacrifices formed an essential part of their worship, but a good hymn of praise, by which the gods were invoked to come down, was equally essential.[1] It may have been realized even in the Indo-Iranian period that the gods must first be praised and pleased before they would descend to partake of the sacrifice. If they were not pleased they might not come down and so the sacrifice would be useless. This would explain the extraordinary stress laid on the composition of good hymns in the *Ṛigveda*.[2]

The Indo-Iranian prayer may therefore have been something like the following:

'O thou Ahurian one, grant me an offspring manly and legitimate, who may promote my house, my village, my tribe and province, and the authority thereof . . . May'st thou hear our sacrificial chants . . . The good waters give to him who sacrifices both splendour and glory, with health and vigour of the body and prominence of form . . . a long enduring life.'[3]

In the acts of worship of this period are to be recognized the cult of fire, and the animal and the *soma* sacrifices.[4] What Herodotus had seen among the Persians of his time may be taken to be an approximately correct outline of the

[1] Vedic *āhuti*=Av. *āzūiti*, 'an offering', Vedic *hotar*=Av. *zaotar*, 'an invoking priest'.

[2] We have here four common words: Vedic *mantra*=Av. *manthra*, 'a prayer', Vedic *sukta*=Av. *hukhta*, 'well uttered word', or 'hymn'; *uktha*=*ukhdha*, and *gāthā*=*gātha*, 'a hymn'.

[3] *Yasna*, LXVIII. 5, 9, 10-11; SBE., XXXI, pp. 321-2; see also, *Yasna*, LXII. 1ff.

[4] Vedic *yajña*=Av. *yasna*, 'a sacrifice'.

Indo-Iranian sacrifice.[1] He says: 'The manner of the sacrifice of the Persians to the gods is as follows: they neither make them altars nor kindle a fire when about to sacrifice: they use no libation, no flute, no garlands, no meal. But as one desires to sacrifice to each of these deities, he takes the victim to a pure place and calls upon the gods . . . . Then when he has cut up the victim and seethed the flesh, he spreads out a carpet of the tenderest herbage, especially clover, and sets all the flesh thereon. When he has thus disposed it, a Magian man stands by and chants a theogony thereto, for such the Persians say the chant is. Without a Magian it is not lawful for him to offer sacrifices. And after waiting a little time the sacrificer takes away the flesh and uses it as he will.'[2]

That the *soma* juice was offered to the gods and drunk by the priests is certain, but want of evidence precludes any detailed description.[3]

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[1] See Edwards, 'Sacrifice (Iranian)', ERE., XI, p. 18b; and 'Worship (Parsi)', ERE., XII, p. 807a.

[2] Herodotus, i. 132; see also, Strabo, xv. 3, 13-14.

[3] Some more information however, may be found in DHMV., 'Ancient Ceremonies', by K. E. Pavri; and F. Windischmann, *Uber den Somakultus der Arier*, 1846.

## CHAPTER VIII

# VEDIC LITERATURE AND CULTURE

### 1. *Introductory*

AFTER having gone through the multifarious definitions of religion and the various theories regarding the origin of religion and after attempting to peep into the misty haze of the Indo-European and Indo-Iranian periods, we at last emerge into the comparatively clearer daylight of the Vedic period. In the last two chapters, unlike the two preceding them, our task was historical though we had to labour under the great disadvantage of possessing no direct record of any sort belonging to either of those two great periods. Now we are in a comparatively better position, though not yet quite out of the field of uncertainty and indefiniteness. With the whole of the great book of the *Ṛigveda* before us, which in extent equals the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together and the contents of which are more than three thousand years old, however uncertain its exact date and development, we have some firm ground beneath our feet; and with the inquiry being now limited to the peoples of India our task becomes much lighter.

### 2. *A Brief Survey of the Vedic Literature*

At the very threshold of Indian history we come across an extensive literature, generally known as the Vedic literature. It covers, according to the most cautious estimates, a period of seven or eight hundred years and is essentially religious in character. The whole of this literature naturally falls into three well-defined literary periods, marking three distinct stages in the growth of both the language and the thought.

The three periods are:

I. The period of the four Vedas.
II. The period of the Brāhmaṇas, including the older Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads.
III. The period of the Sūtras.

This scheme is adopted by Macdonell,[1] but other authors divide the Vedic literature differently. Thus Max Müller[2] distinguishes two separate periods in the composition and collection of the four Vedas, as follows:

(1) The Chhandas period, i.e. the period during which the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* were composed.
(2) The Mantra period, i.e. the period when the Vedic hymns and formulas were collected and systematically arranged in four books or Saṁhitās.

Professor Winternitz[3] unites the Brāhmaṇas and the Sūtras into one period, and assigns a different period to the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads, but for these works there is no great difference between the divisions given by Macdonell and those of Max Müller. The latter simply assigns an independent period to the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* which the former considers to form a part—although admittedly an important and quite a distinct part—of the period of the four Vedas. But Winternitz's classification differs from both of these and appears questionable for two reasons. Firstly, the bulk of the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads is more akin to the Brāhmaṇas than the Sūtras; and secondly, some at least of the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads are earlier in date than most of the literature in the Sūtra style.[4] Lastly, we may add that, traditionally, Brāhmaṇas together with the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads belong to the class of Śruti while the Sūtras belong to that of Smṛti, a distinction not 'altogether artificial and devoid of historical meaning'.[5]

[1] HSL., p. 29. [2] OGR., pp. 149–56; ASL., p. 70. [3] Winternitz, I, p. 48.
[4] Müller, *Upanishads*, SBE., I, p. lxvii. cf. Keith, TS., pp. lxxviii ff.
[5] Müller, ASL., p. 76.

In dividing the Vedic literature into any parts whatsoever we must bear in mind the fact that, excepting the four Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas, the Vedic literature that is pre-Buddhistic and the Vedic literature that is post-Buddhistic is so mixed up, that its division into chronologically separate periods is impossible; for all the Araṇyakas and Upanishads were not written at a definite period, but during a period extending over at least four to five hundred years. There are a few Upanishads which are undoubtedly anterior to the Sūtras, but a large number of them were written during and after the Sūtra period. So it is best to divide all the Upanishads into two parts, assigning the older part to the Brāhmaṇa period and the other to the later Sūtra period and the period following the rise of Buddhism.[1]

## *I. The Four Vedas*

The word *Veda* literally means 'knowledge' (from the root *vid*, to know), later coming to mean 'sacred knowledge' or 'sacred lore', and is used in two different senses. First it is used as a collective designation not only for the four Vedas or collections, but also for the Brāhmaṇas (including the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads appended to those Brāhmaṇas). In this sense it is used synonymously with the word Śruti or 'revealed texts' as opposed to Smṛti or 'traditional texts'.[2] In the second sense, the word is used to denote each one of the four individual collections of hymns and prayers, which are called the *Ṛig*-veda, the *Sāma*-veda, the *Yajur*-veda and the *Atharva*-veda. In the beginning only the first three Vedas were recognized as canonical, and they were later spoken of as the *trayi vidyā*, or the 'triple knowledge'.[3]

1 The term Upanishad does not represent a closed canon but an indefinitely extensive type of literature 'which has not been formally concluded and which may yet be continued in the present or the future'.—Bloomfield, AV., p. 18.

2 This distinction, according to Max Müller, was made by the Brahmans after their ascendency was established.—ASL., pp. 76-7.

3 Macdonell, HSL., pp. 29-30; Bloomfield, RV., p. 17.

The *Ṛig*-veda is the Veda of hymns and prayers (*ṛk*-lit. 'a laudatory stanza') addressed to the natural powers such as the sky, earth, dawn, waters, etc. as gods; and they were meant for loud recitation. We shall have to deal with its contents more fully later on.

The *Sāma*-veda is the Veda of chants (*Sāman*) and consists of hymns, mostly borrowed from the *Ṛigveda*, which are set to music and are meant to be sung by the Sāman singers during the performance of the Soma sacrifice. Being almost entirely based on the *Ṛigveda* it possesses practically no independent value.

The *Yajur*-veda is the Veda of 'sacrificial prayers' (*yajus*), and besides a great many stanzas borrowed from the *Ṛigveda* it also contains original prose formulas. There are two schools of the *Yajurveda*, the Black and the White. The *Yajurveda* of the Black school does not separate the sacrificial formulas from their prose explanations and comments, but presents the whole in a mixed form. The *Yajurveda* of the White school on the other hand, not only makes a distinction between the sacrificial formulas and the prose explanations, but collects the whole mass into two parts, calling the collection of the formulas the Saṁhitā and the collection of prose explanations a Brāhmaṇa. We have three complete recensions of the Black *Yajurveda*, viz. of the Taittirīya, the Kāṭhaka and the Maitrāyaṇīya schools, but only one of the White *Yajurveda*, the Saṁhitā part of which is called the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, and the Brāhmaṇa part the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[1]

The *Atharva*-veda is a collection of quite a miscellaneous character. It contains, on the one hand, several hymns borrowed from the *Ṛigveda* and especially the tenth book of that collection, and on the other, various magical spells and incantations directed against hostile agencies such as illness, demons and enemies of man in general and of Brāhmans in particular; and on the whole this latter element of

[1] cf. Keith, CHI., I, pp. 114-15.

witchcraft and sorcery predominates. It did not form part of the sacred canon for a long time, and even during the later period of classical Sanskrit literature its high authority was not quite unquestioned. This may have been due, first, to its apparent worldly character, secondly, to its lateness, and thirdly, to its being unconnected with the sacrifice which forms an essential part of the other three Vedas.[1]

Next to the *Ṛigveda*, this is the most important of the Vedas. For it presents an interesting and unparalleled picture of primitive popular belief and superstition current among the lower strata of the early Indo-Aryans; and some of its matter may be as old as the time when the Indo-Europeans were still one people. Thus this Veda forms an important supplement to the *Ṛigveda*, allowing us a deep insight 'into the obscurer relations and emotions of human life',[2] while the *Ṛigveda* limits itself to the religious notions and practices of the upper classes of the Aryan tribes.

### *II. The Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads*

The Brāhmaṇas, meaning 'books dealing with devotion or prayer' (*brāhmaṇ*) are theological prose works attached to the four Saṁhitās. Their purpose is to elucidate the meaning and to explain the application of the sacred texts to sacrificial ceremonies along with the symbolical import of different rites and rituals. Besides this purely ceremonial matter, the Brāhmaṇas contain valuable information on the interpretation of the Vedic texts.

The Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads are closely connected with the Brāhmaṇas, and sometimes with the Saṁhitās themselves. Āraṇyakas (lit. 'forest-books') are so called because they are intended to be studied in the solitude of the forests. They resemble the Brāhmaṇas both in character and style and supplement them by giving additional information with regard to the rites inadequately treated of in the Brāhmaṇas and by describing special ceremonies not previously dealt with in the Brāhmaṇas.

[1] Macdonell, HSL., pp. 191–5. [2] Bloomfield, quoted in Art. 'Sanskṛit', EB.

The Upanishads are philosophical treatises in the form of dialogues, being the first attempts of the early Indians at a systematic treatment of metaphysical problems. The number of known Upanishads, most of which are nominally attached to the *Atharvaveda*, is very great (about 170),[1] but they are of very varying age and importance. Those which form part of the Saṁhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, and the Āraṇyakas of the three older Vedas are perhaps the oldest.

There are two Brāhmaṇas of the *Ṛigveda* which have come down to us, viz. the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Kauṣītaki* (or *Śāṅkhāyana*) *Brāhmaṇa*. They are clearly two distinct versions based on the same stock of exegetic and legendary matter, but nevertheless showing considerable difference in arrangement and in having a certain amount of material peculiar to each of them. From its comparatively simpler style and a more systematic arrangement, the *Kauṣītaki Brāhmaṇa* appears to be later than, at any rate, the older parts of the *Aitareya*. The supplementary or concluding portions of these Brāhmaṇas are called the Āraṇyakas and the Upanishads, and bear the same names as the Brāhmaṇas.

The Brāhmaṇas of the *Sāmaveda* have a special character of their own as they are not, like others of the same class, different versions of the same matter but are quite distinct treatises dealing chiefly with the technique of chants. Their traditional number is given as eight, but this tradition does not seem to be quite correct as the number of works that are found and that certainly once belonged to the same class is greater than eight. The *Chāndogya Brāhmaṇa*, of which the famous *Chāndogya Upanishad* forms a part, is one of the Sāmaveda Brāhmaṇas. To the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* of the *Yajurveda* are appended the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* and the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka*, a part of the latter being known as the Upanishad of the same name; and to the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā* (or the *White Yajurveda*) belongs the

[1] Müller, *Upanishads*, SBE., I, pp. lxviii-lxix. Barth, RI., p. 65f.

*Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, which includes the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*. The Maitrāyaṇiya and the Kāṭhaka schools have also preserved Upanishads of the same names. The *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa* is the only Brāhmaṇa of the *Atharvaveda* and is quite modern and unimportant.

### *III. The Sūtras*

The third and the last stage of Vedic literature consists of Sūtras (lit. 'thread') or books which give a systematic and connected account of the Vedic ritual on the one hand and customary law on the other. Their main object is to supply as briefly as possible a connected survey of the whole mass of complicated details of the ritual contained in the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas, so that an ordinary Brahmin could perform the rites and sacrifices without any mistake of detail and without learning by heart the bulky Brāhmaṇas. They were meant as a help to memory.

The Sūtras are divided into two parts, called the *Śrauta Sūtras* or the Sūtras based on Śruti (revelation) and the *Smārta Sūtras* or Sūtras based on Smṛti (tradition). The *Smārta Sūtras* are again divided into two parts, viz. the *Gṛhya Sūtras* ('home aphorisms') which contain a description of household ceremonies, and the *Dharma Sūtras* ('aphorisms regarding religion and philosophy') which treat of customary law of the ancient Indians.

The Śāṅkhāyana and the Aśvalāyana *Śrauta Sūtras* and also the *Gṛhya Sūtras* bearing the same names, belong to the *Ṛigveda*, while the *Śrauta Sūtras* of Maśaka, Lāṭyāyana and Drāhyāyana together with the Gobhila *Gṛhya Sūtra* belong to the *Sāmaveda*. The Kātyāyana *Śrauta Sūtra* and the *Kātīya* or Vājasaneya *Gṛhya Sūtra* belong to the *White Yajurveda*, while there are six *Śrauta Sūtras* and seven *Gṛhya Sūtras* belonging to the *Black Yajurveda*. The *Vaitāna* is meant to be the *Śrauta Sūtra* and the *Kauśika* the *Gṛhya Sūtra* of the *Atharvaveda*, though the latter is not purely a *Gṛhya Sūtra*.[1]

[1] Macdonell, HSL., pp. 244–51.

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### 3. *Vedic Chronology*

Chronologically, however, the whole of this tremendous literature is 'a perfect labyrinth of buildings, involved one in another',[1] as we find hardly any certain data by which we can ascertain even the age of some of these important works. This distressing fact is attributed to two peculiarities of the Indian character, viz. a singular lack of a historical sense and an uncommon indifference to worldly deeds and actions. Early Indians have achieved notable results in various branches of science, literature and art,[2] but so far as history is concerned, there is not a single fragment which gives us information of any value for determining the age of Vedic compositions and generally for constructing Vedic chronology as a whole. Under such circumstances, scholars were forced to have recourse to indirect evidence, the natural result of which is that ancient Indian chronology has remained extremely uncertain and a matter of very vague approximations.

Apart from the orthodox Indian view, which considers, as all orthodox people do when the canonical scriptures of their own religions are concerned, that the Veda was revealed to the ancient seers, and is self-existent and eter-

[1] Barth, RI., p. xxii. [2] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 10.

nal, conclusions with regard to the chronology of ancient Indian literature are based on one or more of the following considerations:

(1) Fixing the date of the death of the Buddha, which is itself in a great measure based upon the evidence of the invasion of India by Alexander the Great.
(2) Examining the language, literature and civilization as recorded in Vedic literature.
(3) Astronomical data found in the *Ṛigveda.*
(4) Comparing the contents of the *Ṛigveda* and the *Avesta* and by fixing the date of the *Avesta.*
(5) The recent finds in Persia, called the inscriptions of Boghaz-köi.[1]

But it should by no means be thought that every one of these is of equal importance; as, for example, the finds in Persia are declared by some authorities to be of no value in ascertaining the age of the *Ṛigveda.*[2]

The chronology of Vedic literature given by Max Müller, which was mainly based on the date of the death of the Buddha and the evidence of the Vedic language and literature is still, for want of any other reliable evidence or a more powerful argument, the most generally adhered to. He first distinguished four great literary classes of compositions, corresponding to four great periods in the growth of the Vedic religion and of the theological systems of the Brāhmans. And since several of the most eminent authors of works in the Sūtra style lived prior to, or contemporaneously with, the rise and spread of Buddhism, and since 477 B.C. is the most probable date of the Buddha's death,[3] he assigns the date 600 B.C. for the beginning of the latest development of the Vedic literature, viz. the Sūtra period.

[1] They were first discovered in 1907. For a short account see CHI., I, pp. 72-3 and 110-11.
[2] Keith, CHI., I, p. 111.
[3] Müller, ASL., pp. 298-9; OGR., pp. 138-9; *Ṛigveda Saṁhitā*, IV, p. xiii.

The lower limit of this period is taken to be about 200 B.C. Now the Sūtras presuppose the existence of the Brāhmaṇas. The elaborate details of ritual and sacrifices developed in the Brāhmaṇas, and the literary and theological activity displayed by them, could not have extended over less than 200 years; hence 800–600 B.C. is assigned to the Brāhmaṇas. The Brāhmaṇas, again, presuppose the existence of a complete collection of Vedic hymns and 'as several generations of modern poets and probably two classes of collectors have to be accommodated in it', he allows a further 200 years to the Mantra period (as he calls it), and thus arrives at 1000–800 B.C. as the limits of that period. The last and the most important period in the history of Vedic literature is the one when the Vedic Indians were entering the land of the Seven Rivers. Considering the contents of the oldest hymns of the *Ṛigveda* he suggested 200 years as the minimum necessary for the composition of those hymns. Thus 1200–1000 B.C. is assigned to the Chhandas, the oldest Vedic period. These dates are now accepted by practically all scholars who have contributed to the *Cambridge History of India*.[1]

To Macdonell[2] this estimate of Max Müller 'appears much nearer the mark' for two reasons. Firstly, because 'a period of three centuries, say from 1300–1000 B.C. would amply account for the difference between what is oldest and newest in Vedic poetry'; and secondly 'the affinity of the oldest form of the Avestan language with the dialect of the Vedas is so great, that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that the Indian branch must have separated from the Iranian only a very short time before the beginnings of Vedic literature, and can therefore have hardly entered the north-west of India even as early as 1500 B.C.' Thus, Macdonell uses the fourth consideration merely to check the result arrived at by considering the first and second; while Hopkins and Jackson, basing their argument

[1] I, p. 697. [2] HSL., p. 12.

mainly on the fourth, conclude that the Vedas must have come into existence some time between 1000 B.C. and 600 B.C., since the date of Zoroaster is now generally fixed at 660–583 B.C. This may also be taken as the date of the oldest part of the *Avesta*, and since the difference between the *Avesta* and the *Ṛigveda* is one of dialect only, the two works cannot be separated from each other by a period greater than two hundred years. Thus they place the bulk of the *Ṛigveda* hymns between 800–600 B.C.[1]

Professor Keith,[2] following the arguments of Max Müller and relying perforce on the development of the civilization and literature of the period as the best criterion, thinks that the oldest hymns of the *Ṛigveda*, such as those of Uṣas, may have been composed as early as 1200 B.C., the Brāhmaṇa period may have begun not later than 800 B.C., and 'the Upanishads cannot be dated as, on the whole, later than 550 B.C.'

Two of the most important writers who have based their conclusions on astronomical grounds are Jacobi and Ṭilak who assign 3500–2500 B.C. and 4000–2500 B.C. respectively to the composition of the Ṛigvedic hymns.[3] Most scholars, however, consider these conclusions to have been based on 'wholly improbable assumptions',[4] and at present they seem to have been almost abandoned.

The opinion with regard to the finds in Persia has been already stated, and most scholars would probably take the same view. At any rate, no independent theory, based solely on the inscriptions of Boghaz-köi, which probably belong to 1400 B.C., has yet been formulated and the discovery has not influenced the earlier estimates in any way. The excavations at present going on in Sind and the Punjab are reported to put back the antiquity of the *Ṛigveda* at least by five centuries, but definite information is not yet

[1] Griswold, RV., p. 68. [2] CHI., I, pp. 112–13.
[3] Griswold, RV., p. 69.
[4] Keith, CHI., I, p. 111, Macdonell, HSL., p. 12; Griswold, RV., p. 69.

available. If this expectation is realized, the whole of the Vedic chronology will have to be reconstructed.

### 4. *Two Divisions of Early Indian Religion: Vedic Religion and Brahmanism*

From the point of view of religion, the Vedic literature divides itself into two parts, viz. the *Ṛigveda* on the one hand and the rest of the Vedic literature on the other; and the two distinct phases of essentially the same religion may be called Vedic religion and Brahmanism. This division and the above two names hardly need any justification. It is now recognized beyond doubt that, although Brahmanism is nothing but an isolated development of the religion contained in the *Ṛigveda*, yet the two religions are entirely different in spirit. While one represents a comparatively exalted form of a purer faith based on nature-worship, the other tends to become artificial, mechanical and hieratic, and makes rites and ceremonies its chief concern.[1]

The *Ṛigveda* is the only book where we can find the pure Vedic religion. The *Sāmaveda* and *Yajurveda* were composed during a transitional period which later led to the sacerdotal religion of the Brāhmaṇas and the Āraṇyakas.

### 5. *Importance of the Ṛigveda*

The importance of the *Ṛigveda* has by now become so well known that instead of describing it we will confine ourselves to a brief enumeration of the principal reasons on which it is based. They are:

(1) With the exception of the Egyptian monumental records and papyrus rolls and the Assyrian literature, it is the oldest literary document preserved.

(2) Historically, it gives us a clear idea of the civilization of a very early age, such as is not to be found anywhere else.

[1] Müller, PR., p. 74.

(3) Linguistically, it has won the glory of having established the science of comparative philology on firmer foundations by making evident the unity of Indo-European languages and to some extent of the Indo-European peoples.

(4) It gave the first impetus to the science of comparative mythology, and to a student of religion it gives a unique and an unparalleled picture of the religious beliefs and practices of one of the most civilized ancient races of mankind, at the same time shedding a flood of light on Indo-European and Indo-Iranian mythologies.

(5) Last but not least, it helps to explain 'the stupendous superstructure of the later Hindu religion and institution', in the absence of which able writers might have sought to prove that Hinduism, like other religions, originated in nothing else but fetishism, totemism, or ghost-worship.

'So great an influence has the Vedic age exercised upon all succeeding periods of Indian history, so closely is every branch of literature connected with Vedic traditions, so deeply have the religious and moral ideas of that primitive era taken root in the mind of the Indian nation, so minutely has almost every private and public act of Indian life been regulated by old traditionary precepts that it is impossible to find the right point of view for judging of Indian religion, morals and literature without a knowledge of the literary remains of the Vedic age',[1] that 'in the long row of books belonging to this period, the first place will belong for ever to the *Ṛigveda*'.[2] The *Ṛigveda* is 'the only real or historical Veda'.[3]

### 6. *How the Ṛigveda was preserved*

The *Ṛigveda* is a collection (*saṁhitā*) of *mantras* or hymns consisting of *ṛcas* or verses, later intended for loud recitation.

[1] Müller, ASL., p. 9. [2] ibid., p. 63. [3] Müller, OGR., p. 155.

The text as we have it contains 1,017 hymns divided into ten *Maṇḍalas* (lit. ' circles '), or books, of unequal size. There are also eleven more hymns known as the Vālakhilya hymns, but they are not generally included in the collection and are apparently later in date. The *Ṛigveda* has been handed down to us in only one recension and it is a practical certainty that we possess it to-day almost in the same form as when it came into existence as a collection, except for a few verbal changes here and there. Poets of different families had, at different times, going back at any rate to the Indo-Iranian period, been in the habit of composing poems addressed to the higher natural powers and phenomena as gods ; and being supposed to be the products of an inspiration which was later believed to be divine, these poems continued to be handed down among the members of the same family from generation to generation by an immemorial oral tradition. How long this went on we cannot say for certain, but at some very distant date a few individuals, probably belonging to one or two generations, decided to collect this sacred poetry current among the various priestly families, with a desire to preserve this ancient heritage of the wisdom of their forefathers. These compilers of the Saṁhitā do not appear to have in any way altered the diction or character of the hymns, except by applying certain rules of *Sandhi* which prevailed in their time.[1] The great value these creators of the Saṁhitā, and Vedic people of that time in general attached to the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* is abundantly clear from the extraordinary and numerous precautions which were employed to prevent the sacred text from being lost or corrupted.

The earliest expedient[2] was the formation of the Pada-pāṭha or ' word-text ', in which all the words of the Saṁhitā text are separated and given in original form as unaffected by the rules of Sandhi, and in which most compounds are dissolved. This was soon followed by the Krama-pāṭha or ' step-text ' (lit. ' sequence text ') in which every word of the Pada-text occurs twice, being connected with the word which

[1] Macdonell, VRS., pp. xii-xiii. [2] ibid., p. xiii ; HSL., pp. 51-2.

precedes and the word which follows. The Krama-pāṭha was again similarly treated as the Pada-text, in the Jaṭā-pāṭha or 'woven-text'. The culmination of the whole process of preserving texts by giving their words in different combinations was reached in the extremely complicated Ghana-pāṭha, which subjects the Jaṭā-pāṭha to a similar treatment. But these by no means exhaust the precautions. There are the Prātiśākhyas, which exhibit all the rules by which the Pada-text can be turned into the Saṁhitā, giving also the euphonic rules observed and the rules of the account. Finally, the various works called Anukramaṇis (or 'indices') enumerate the number of hymns, verses, words and even syllables of the whole of the *Ṛigveda*, giving in the Saṁhitā order the deity to whom the hymn is addressed, the poet by whom it was composed and also the metre of the hymns of the *Ṛigveda*. As a result of these extraordinarily minute safeguards, the text of the *Ṛigveda*, which is at least 2500 years old, has been preserved to us with an unparalleled fidelity.

### 7. *Contents of the Ṛigveda*

Out of the ten unequal books in which the *Ṛigveda* is divided, books II–VII are known as 'family books' because each one of them is attributed to a family of ancient seers (*ṛṣis*). Thus book II is attributed to the family of Gṛtsamada or Bhārgava; III to that of Viśvāmitra or Kuśika; IV of Vāmadeva; V of Atri; VI of Bharadvāja; and VII to that of Vaśiṣṭha.[1] These six books are much more homogeneous in contents and internal arrangement than the remaining; for which reason they are believed to have existed as a separate group before the other books were added, and thus formed the nucleus of the whole collection.

Book VIII and the first 50 hymns of book I are ascribed to the family of the Kaṇvas, and appear to be of later

[1] Bloomfield, RV., p. 28; Keith, CHI., p. 77; Macdonell, HSL., pp. 40–5; Art. 'Sanskrit,' EB.; Müller, PR., pp. 59-60.

origin than the second part of book I.[1] These hymns are again, unlike the others, arranged strophically in groups of two or three stanzas and form the bulk of those which later appear in the *Sāmaveda* as set to music.[2] It is possible that the first eight books formed a collection when all the hymns addressed to the deified plant Soma and the drink made by pressing it, as *soma pavamāna* 'the clearly flowing *soma*', were taken out from the previously existing books and collected into a book by itself.

Book X shows clear signs of being, in some parts, the latest, and the second part of book I agrees with it both in its unsystematic arrangement and the miscellaneous character of its contents. According to Max Müller[3] and others, book X contains whatever was left over of Vedic poetry after the collection of the first nine books was complete. It also contains the same number of hymns as book I (191) and like it, is ascribed to no particular family. There are undoubtedly some hymns which must have been composed as early as those of the older books, but there are also others of decidedly later origin, which are altogether different in spirit from those of the other books, and show signs of developed forms of language and metre. Some of these are cosmogonic and philosophic,[4] others are addressed to abstract deities such as *Jñānam*[5] (knowledge) and *Śraddhā*[6] (faith) and Liberality,[7] while others are meant as spells and incantations[8] of the type found in the *Atharvaveda*. Excepting one hymn which is addressed to *Rati*[9] (Pleasure) and which occurs in the second part of book I, these subjects are altogether foreign to the older books.

1 Keith, ibid.
2 Bloomfield, RV. and Macdonell, HSL., l.c.
3 Müller, PR., p. 60.
4 e.g., 90, 129, 130 and 190.
5 71.
6 151.
7 117, and is entitled *dhanānnadāna praśaṁsā*.—Müller, *The Hymns of the RV. in the Saṁhitā text*, London, 1873, p. 378.
8 e.g., 145, 155, 161, 163, 164, 166 and 184.
9 I, 179.

### 8. *Indo-Aryan Settlement in the Punjab*

The *Ṛigveda* does not tell us how and for what reason the Aryan invaders entered India, and consequently this has been a subject of much speculation. But it is clear that the Aryans entered India through the passes of the Hindukush, occupying the country as they proceeded and still pushing forward with the zeal of adventurers in an unknown land. In this we receive the best help from the names of the rivers mentioned in the *Ṛigveda*. It is not possible, however, to identify all the rivers mentioned (about 23, 21 of which occur in one hymn, X. 75), but the mention of the rivers Suvāstu (Swat) Kubhā (Kabul) Mehatnū, Krumu (Kurum) and Gomatī (Gomal) can be taken to mean that the region through which these rivers flow was the first occupied by the invading tribes. It appears very probable that this colonization was followed along the banks of the rivers, sometimes crossing them but most of the time moving either up or down the stream. Even by this simple process the invaders were bound to come to the Indus, sooner or later, because all the above mentioned rivers are in fact tributaries which flow into the Indus.

On the banks of the Indus the Vedic Indians must have found themselves in a much milder and a more pleasant climate and also a more fertile land. They appear to have remained there for a long time, but afterwards proceeded still further, gradually crossing all the five main tributaries of the Indus, viz. the Vitastā (Jhelum), the Asikni (Chenab) the Paruṣṇi or the Irāvatī (Ravi), the Vipaś (Beas) and the Śutudri (Sutlej). Thus, at RV. I. 131, 5, we find the following words:

> '(God Indra) thou didst help thy suppliants; one river after another they gained who pursued glory.'

Thus proceeding, at the end of the Ṛigvedic period, the Indo-Aryans appear to have reached as far east as the Ganges, which is expressly mentioned for the first time in

X. 75, evidently a late hymn.[1] Towards the south the Aryan settlement had very nearly reached the sea. Still the word *samudra* has not come to mean 'sea', but is used to denote a big stream only.

In this wide area extending from eastern Afghanistan as far as the Ganges in the east, and from the foot of the Himālayas to the mouth of the Indus in the south, were the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* composed. Efforts have been made to determine the regions where a particular group of hymns must have been composed and to determine a chronological order in the hymns, but they cannot be said to have been yet wholly successful.[2]

The composers of the hymns collectively call themselves by the name Āryas, and were at one time divided into as many as sixty-five tribes.[3] We can, however, obtain no definite information regarding the relations between them. The only conclusion that is possible, is that all these tribes, though conscious of their racial and religious unity, were not always on peaceful terms with each other. Besides the great battle 'of the ten kings', conflicts among the different tribes appear to have been quite frequent. The battle 'of the ten kings' is, however, one of the greatest fought during the Ṛigvedic period, as it is certainly the greatest described and the most frequently alluded to. It was fought on the banks of the Paruṣṇi, where 'the King Sudās scattered the twenty-one peoples who had attacked him through lust of glory and where Indra wrought their downfall as the skilled priest clips grass'.[4]

### 9. *Vedic Civilization and Religion not primitive*

The word *āryan*, which seems to be as old as the Indo-Iranian period,[5] was applied by the Vedic Indians to themselves, more particularly when they came into conflict with

[1] Reference to the Ganges at VI. 45. 31, is doubtful.

[2] Keith, CHI.; Griswold, RV.

[3] *Vedic Index.* [4] RV., VII. 18. 11.

[5] '*Ārya* or *Arya* in Sanskrit, *Airya* in Zend, which means "of good family, noble".'—CHI., p. 73.

the dark aborigines, the original inhabitants (probably of the same stock as the present Dravidians) who occupied north-western India before the Aryan invasion. This is clear from the fact that, except in the tenth book of the *Ṛigveda*, the words *ārya* or *āryans* never occurs without the word *dāsa* or *dasyu* being mentioned almost in the same stanza.[1] It may also be mentioned here, that racial and religious consciousness, which had its beginning in the Indo-Iranian period, as indicated by the use of the name *Ārya* for this branch of the Indo-European family and which was clearly present among the Indo-Aryans in a very marked degree, however natural its cause, shows among various other things, that the Vedic Indians had already attained an advanced stage of national and social development even though they retained some of the most primitive institutions and characteristics. Neither was the state of the general civilization of the Vedic people in any sense primitive. They[2] had already abandoned purely nomadic life and had long been living in houses which, though still simple in construction, could be closed by a door having a strap with which it could be fastened. Fences were used for protection against wild animals, while earth mounds and ditches were used as a protection from the attacks of enemies. Although they had not given up hunting, they had made good progress in agriculture and cattle keeping; they had learnt the use of oxen for ploughing, of horses for warfare and chariot-racing, and of dogs for hunting and keeping watch by night. They prepared bread from barley (*yava*) and used milk, ghee and various fruits and vegetables, while the use of flesh, as well as of the two principal Vedic spirituous liquors *soma* and *surā*, was restricted to ceremonious occasions only. They caught lions by laying snares, antelopes by digging pits, birds by nets and foils, while boars were hunted with

[1] cf., e.g. RV., I. 103. 3; II. 11. 19; V. 34. 61; VI. 18. 3; VII. 5, 6; III. 34. 9; X. 86. 19; 102. 3; 138. 3; etc.

[2] This is a sketch based mainly on Kaegi, RV., pp. 12ff.; Macdonell, HSL., pp. 146–51, 163–70.

dogs. Although they had not made very great progress in navigation, they knew the use of boats in crossing rivers. Neither was their way of fighting with the enemy undeveloped. As is mentioned above, they used ditches and earth mounds, and in war the chief command usually belonged to the king. There are indications that riding on horseback was known to them, and although cavalry does not seem to have been known, chariots drawn by horses were frequently used. They were also acquainted with gold and stored it as treasure. There were carpenters, joiners, smiths and wheelwrights; and women were acquainted with sewing and with the plaiting of mats from grass or reeds.

They also had various amusements to entertain themselves. They frequently played dice, danced in the open air, and were well acquainted with different kinds of music. Their clothes were made of sheep's wool of different colours and sometimes adorned with gold. So also are necklets, bracelets, anklets and ear-rings mentioned as ornaments.

The organization of the family, though in fact a continuation of the old Indo-European household, was practically the same as it exists in India to the present time, which, whatever may be said against it, has its own good points. Neither were they lacking in ideas of government and law. They had a king, whose office was as a rule hereditary, but he never possessed any very great or arbitrary powers; and it is possible he might sometimes have been elected, though certain evidence on this point is lacking. Adultery and rape were counted among the most serious offences, while illegitimate birth and robbery were recognized as crimes and were punished. The standard of morality was evidently comparatively high. Mention is also made in the *Ṛigveda* of paying debt by instalments.

Although writing came into existence only at the close of the Vedic period, the Vedic people had already developed the rich and scientific language in which the *Ṛigveda* is written and which, from the point of view of phonetics at least, is a marvellous achievement.

Socially again, they were in an advanced condition. Besides the racial and religious consciousness which they manifested at every step in the *Ṛigveda*, they were free from most of the social blemishes which considerably darken the life history of the Indians throughout all later periods.

Caste-system—although four castes are mentioned by name in one hymn (X. 90), which is admitted by all authorities to be one of the latest added—in any definite form or shape was unknown. It is however probable that both priesthood and nobility were tending to become hereditary and that these two classes distinguished themselves from the rest of the Aryan community. The priests indeed were receiving definite names, but this only determined their position at the sacrifice, and had nothing to do with their social position. On the other hand, the whole of the Aryan community was sharply distinguished from the dark-coloured, phallus-worshipping Dasyus, and prayers for the preservation of the Aryan colour (*varṇa*, a word which later came to mean a 'caste') and for victory over the Dasyus are constantly addressed.

The amount of freedom enjoyed by women during that time was greater than at any subsequent period throughout the history of the Indian peoples extending over 3000 years. They enjoyed social liberty and equality with men, and were barred from neither learning the scriptures nor the performance of sacrifices and offering of oblations. They did not marry very young and had some voice in the choice of their husbands. Remarriage of widows was not prohibited and if the voluntary burning of the widow with her dead husband was an Indo-European custom, it appears to have been in abeyance during this period.

Meat and even beef were freely eaten; there was as yet no objection against inter-dining and no defilement by touch existed. A future life was believed in, but the doctrine of transmigration was unknown and, as has been already remarked, the standard of morality was by no means low. There is hardly any black magic to be met with, nor were

the self-mortifying practices of asceticism and austerity present.

This sketch of Vedic civilization, brief and inadequate in many respects though it be, amply justifies the conclusion that the Vedic people were anything but primitive.[1] The development of culture and civilization goes hand in hand with mental development, and it is but natural that the religion of the Vedic people, as it must correspond with the development of their mental capacities, should not be primitive but considerably advanced, though it is yet simple in its fundamentals. Thus it is quite in order that we do not find in the hymns of the *Ṛigveda*, 'a naive outburst of poetic feeling,' but a sacerdotal Brahmanism in its simplest beginnings, in the process of taking firm root.

Some thousands of years had passed since the remote ancestors of the Vedic Indians had first come to believe in the existence of some power or powers beyond themselves, through a sense of fear, awe, and need. So far as the Indo-European race is concerned this belief was soon associated with the higher natural powers, such as the sky, the earth, the sun, the moon, fire, etc.[2] and they were generally known as 'the shining ones' or 'the bright ones'. From this belief to invoking their aid and protection must have been an easy step, as these early people could not have cared for anything which was not, directly or indirectly, useful to them; but for a long time they must have expressed it in

1 'Primitive'='characterized by the simplicity of old times; original; especially, having something of the same kind derived from it, but not itself derived from anything of the same kind; plain; old-fashioned.'—*The Century Dictionary*, N.Y. and London, 1890.

='of or belonging to the first stage; pertaining to early times; simple; rude; rough; old-fashioned; original as opposed to derivative.'—*A New English Dictionary*, Oxford, 1909.

The word is not used here in its vague sense, meaning 'pertaining to early times'. It is therefore claimed that the Vedic Indians were neither original, nor plain, nor old-fashioned. cf. Frazer, R. W., *A Literary History of India*, London, 1898, p. 29, and Rapson, AI., p. 40; Farquhar, J. N., *Outline of the Religious Literature of India*, Oxford, 1920, pp. 11ff.

2 Schrader, AR., p. 34.

the crudest language, although very earnestly. The period which intervened between the Indo-European and the Indo-Iranian periods saw considerable development of language, and with it the prayers and invocations came to be much better expressed. This may truly be called the period of 'a primeval, childlike, naïf prayer'.[1] These powers, however, were from the very beginning imagined to have been endowed with the hopes and desires, likes and dislikes of human beings; and as such, the prayers were usually accompanied by some sort of offering to the 'shining one' who was addressed, which during the Indo-Iranian period developed into a definite cult of the Soma sacrifice. Thus the Indo-Iranian religion consisted, in the main, of belief in heavenly powers as divine and their worship by laudatory prayers and offerings of various kinds, of which the Soma sacrifice was the chief. This was, in short, the religion which the Indo-Aryans brought with them when they entered India. The Iranian gods such as Airyaman, Baga, etc. 'which express certain relations of moral and social life',[2] although nominally belonging to the Indo-Iranian period were, in our opinion, peculiar creations of the Iranian people; and although these gods existed during the Indo-Iranian period, the above mentioned 'relations' were not then connected with or attributed to them.

Now we come to the chief purpose of this part, viz. to trace the development of religion during the period of the *Ṛigveda*, by which is here meant the age during which the older part of the Ṛigvedic hymns were composed. The contents of the *Ṛigveda* quite clearly show that the redactors lived in a very different age from the composers, and the final redaction, when the contents of the *Ṛigveda* were ultimately fixed, appears clearly to fall in the period of the Brāhmaṇas. Only thus can we explain the similarity between the contents of the *Atharvaveda* and the latest portions of the *Ṛigveda*. That the *Atharvaveda* really

[1] Pfleiderer, O., quoted in Muir, V, p. 415.
[2] Roth, R., quoted ibid., p. 419.

belongs to the period of the Brāhmaṇas is held even by Bloomfield.[1] But since it is not easy to determine exactly what is new and what is old in the *Ṛigveda*, we will consider the religion of the whole of the *Ṛigveda*, but shall mark wherever possible what conceptions are new and what old.

[1] AV., pp. 3–5.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE VEDIC GODS

SINCE we have restricted the term 'Vedic religion' to the religion found in the *Ṛigveda* only, we will first trace the powers, functions and attributes of the gods invoked in that book; because, excepting a small number of hymns some of which are of undoubtedly later origin, and are secular, magical or philosophical in character, these higher Vedic gods occupy practically the whole of the *Ṛigveda*. Excluding the troupes of deities, such as the Maruts, the 'storm-gods', the number of gods in the *Ṛigveda* is usually stated to be thirty-three, and this number is variously expressed: *trayastriṁśat*,[1] *triṁśati trayas*,[2] *trayaḥ ekādaśa*.[3] But although this statement is often found, it is difficult to make a definite list of these gods. Nor do the Vedic poets themselves appear to have been in any way certain about them, since in some passages gods like Agni, the Aśvins, and the Maruts are specifically mentioned in addition to the compact mass of the ambiguous thirty-three gods. Sometimes however, the gods are said to be more numerous. In one passage,[4] which is repeated in another hymn[5] identically, we read: 'Three hundred, three thousand, thirty and nine gods worshipped Agni.'[6]

The classification of the Vedic gods is a matter of some difficulty, and owing to the indefiniteness of character and obscurity as to the origin of at least some of the gods, no classification, however ingenious, can claim to be perfect. The Vedic poets themselves divide the thirty-three gods into three groups according to the three-fold division of the universe, into heaven, atmosphere and the earth, as deities

[1] I. 45. 2. [2] VIII. 28. 1. [3] IX. 92. 4.
[4] III. 9. 9. [5] X. 52. 6.
[6] *Trīṇi śatā trī sahasrāṇi Agniṁ triṁśac ca devāḥ nava ca asaparyan.*—Muir, V, p. 12.

of heaven, air or atmosphere, and earth. Thus, we have the words: 'Ye gods, who are eleven in the sky, eleven on earth and who in their glory are eleven dwellers in the (atmospheric) waters, do ye gladly enjoy this our offering.'[1] It is true this traditional classification cannot apply logically, since some at least of the gods cannot be assigned to any of these divisions with certainty[2]—not to say anything regarding the application of the mathematical division of the number of gods—but this classification has the great advantage of being simple and is certainly the one that is 'most convenient', as Macdonell[3] calls it.

The five-fold division of Bloomfield indeed pays more attention to chronology, or historical development and the origin of the gods. But the former of these two reasons is obviated by our chapters on I.E. and I.I. religions, which will show, however imperfectly, what gods are older and what the new creations of the Ṛigvedic age; while, so far as the origin of gods is concerned, the classification of Professor Bloomfield[4] itself throws but little light, except to tell us that, owing to the advanced degree of anthropomorphism of some gods, their original natures or physical bases have become partially or completely obscured.

We will thus divide the Vedic gods into three classes, viz.:

(1) the celestial gods,
(2) the atmospheric gods,
(3) the terrestrial gods.

[1] I. 139. 11; Muir, V, p. 10. We also have the following passages from RV. and *Nirukta* respectively:

*Sūryo no divas pātu vāto antarikṣāt*
*Agnir naḥ pārthivebhyaḥ.* X. 158. 1.

*Tisra eva devatā iti Nairuktāḥ. Agniḥ pṛthivīsthāno*
*Vāyur vā Indro vā antarikṣasthānaḥ sūryo dyusthānaḥ.*
Nir. VII. 5. Quoted by Muir, V, p. 8.

See also *Bṛhaddevatā*, I. 5.

[2] Bloomfield, RV., p. 92.

[3] *Hymns*, p. 12.

[4] RV., p. 96.

## Celestial Gods

### *Dyaus*

Dyaus (Heaven), the oldest god of the I.E. peoples and one from whom the Iranian notion of a chief deity was derived, is already on the wane[1] and plays but an insignificant part in the *Ṛigveda*. No independent hymn is addressed to him, nor does he appear with any marked prominence in the half-dozen hymns[2] addressed to Dyaus Pṛithivī (Heaven and Earth). This god is described in the *Ṛigveda* as the consort of the Earth and the progenitor of the gods. In *Ṛigveda* I. 54, a hymn addressed to Indra, occur the words :

'Sing forth to lofty Dyaus a strength-bestowing song, the bold whose resolute mind hath independent sway.'

Here Sāyaṇa identifies Dyaus with Indra, who to some writers seems, in later times, to have succeeded to the functions assigned to the former god.[3]

The word *dyaus* is in most places used to mean the sky and not the sky-god. He is indeed still the father and sometimes even 'the highest father',[4] Heaven and Earth being referred to as *devaputre* 'they whose sons are gods',[5] but no eagerness or exultation is displayed in invoking him. He is once described as 'armed with a bolt', and in another place the lightning is spoken of as a smile on his face.[6] The dawn is also referred to as the daughter of the personified Heaven, Dyaus or Dyu.[7]

#### LITERATURE

In addition to what has been given in footnotes, see Macdonell, VM., pp. 21-2; Müller, OGR., p. 209 and Ch. V, above.

1 Griswold, RV., pp. 25, 149, 98, and 100.
2 ibid., p. 90; Hopkins, RI., p. 58.
3 Muir, V, p. 33.
4 RV., I. 141. 4a, '*pra yat pituḥ paramānnīyate*,' etc.
5 RV., VII. 53. 1; Griswold, RV., p. 99; Muir, V, p. 23.
6 II. 4, 6. 7 RV., I. 30. 22.

### *Varuṇa*

The next god of the sky is Varuṇa. By the side of Indra he is one of the greatest and certainly the most impressive of the Vedic gods. It is practically certain that he dates from the Indo-Iranian period, but whether he was an Indo-European creation is doubtful. His natural substratum is completely lost sight of, but it is probable that he originally represented the sky or some aspect of it.[1]

In the *Ṛigveda* he is the most magnificent and majestic of the gods. Almost all the praiseworthy epithets denoting power and majesty are applied to him, and he performs great cosmic deeds. He is conceived as embracing all things, 'the king of all, both gods and men',[2] 'of the whole world',[3] of 'all that exists',[4] 'he is the primary source of all life and blessings'.[5] Like Indra, he is also called the 'self-dependent monarch' *svarāj*, but more frequently *samrāj* the 'universal monarch', e.g. he is said to dwell in all works as sovereign ruler.[6] Besides these, two other attributes denoting sovereignty, viz. *kṣatra* or *kṣatriya* and the famous epithet *asura* (applied to many gods of the *Ṛigveda*) are more especially applied to Varuṇa. So is the epithet *māyin* 'one possessed of occult power', 'crafty', chiefly mentioned in connexion with Varuṇa.[7]

His personality, however, is more fully developed on the moral than on the physical side, just as his sovereignty is more moral than temporal. Thus descriptions of his person and his equipment are scanty.[8] As a peaceful, moral god he has no need of terrible weapons, and a car which shines like the sun[9] is his only prominent equipment.[10] This car is drawn by well-yoked steeds.[10] The sun is often spoken of as the eye of Mitra and Varuṇa,[11] but Varuṇa alone is said to be thousand-eyed and far-sighted.[12]

1 Bloomfield, RV.
2 II. 27. 10; X. 132. 4.
3 V. 85. 3.
4 VII. 87. 6.
5 VII. 85. 5; VIII. 41. 3.
6 VIII. 42. 1.
7 Macdonell, VM., p. 24.
8 ibid., p. 23.
9 I. 122. 15.
10 V. 62. 4.
11 VI. 51. 1; X. 37. 1.
12 VII. 34. 10; VIII. 90–2.

'Varuṇa propped the two wide worlds asunder, pushed back the lofty vault of heaven and spread out the world.'[1]

'The Air hath Varuṇa placed among the tree-tops, milk in the cows, and strength in the swift horses, wisdom in hearts, and fire within waters; in heaven the sun, and *soma* on the mountains.'[2] It is by his law that the heaven and earth are held apart,[3] and as a result of his mysterious power the rivers flow into one ocean and yet never fill it.[4] He made the golden and revolving sun to shine in the firmament,[5] and for him Varuṇa has opened a wide path.[6] By the fixed and unassailable ordinances of Varuṇa, the shining moon moves at night and the stars placed on high are visible at night but hidden during the day.[7] The clouds fertilize the earth at his command, the rivers follow Varuṇa's holy orders.[8]

As the above passages show, Varuṇa is the great lord of the laws of nature, and his ordinances which govern gods, men and things alike[9] cannot be transgressed. Consequently, the epithet *dhṛta-vrata*[10] especially belongs to him. He is also called *ṛtasyagopā*, 'guardian of law', or order, and *ṛtavat* 'observer of order'.

Varuṇa's power is so great that neither the birds as they fly, nor the rivers as they flow can reach the limit of his dominion, his might and his wrath.[11] He is omniscient; the wise lord; he knows everything. He knows the flight of birds in the sky, the path of ships in the ocean, the course of the far travelling wind, beholds all secret things present, past or future, and witnesses men's truth and falsehood. No creature can even wink without him. He, most wise (*sukratu*) and of fixed laws, sits down among his own people in order to govern, and from thence perceiving, he beholds all happenings (actions)—both that have been and shall be.[12]

1 VII. 86. 1. 2 V. 85. 2; Griswold, RV, p. 133.
3 VI. 70-1. 4 V. 85. 6. 5 VII. 87. 5.
6 VII. 87. 1; I. 24. 8. 7 I. 24. 10. 8 II. 28. 4.
9 VIII. 41. 7. 10 I. 25-6. 11 I. 24. 6.
12 I. 25. 7-11; II. 28. 6; VII. 49. 3.

Moral government of the world is indeed the most outstanding characteristic of Varuṇa, and there is no other god of the *Ṛigveda* who can be compared with him in this respect. Although gods like Agni and Soma[1] are said to possess spies, they (the spies) perform a much more useful function in connexion with Varuṇa. The undeceived and wise spies of Varuṇa behold the two worlds, and knowing the sacrifice, stimulate prayer.[2] This function is also performed by the sun, since the all-seeing sun rising from his abode is said to go to the dwellings of Mitra and Varuṇa to report the deeds of men.[3] His spies are described as sitting round him, when Varuṇa, wearing golden mail, has clad himself in a shining robe.[4] Varuṇa is again the only god of the *Ṛigveda* who is so frequently prayed to forgive or destroy the sins that men have committed through thoughtlessness, and this sentiment is repeatedly expressed in the Varuṇa hymns:

'Somehow through weakness of my will
I went astray, O shining one;
Be gracious, mighty lord, and spare.'[5]

The hymns in which this sentiment is expressed are the most exalted and ethical hymns in the *Ṛigveda*.[6]

[7]'Loosen me from sin as from a bond that
binds me. May we swell.
Far from me, Varuṇa, remove all danger;
Accept me graciously, thou holy sovran.
Cast off, like cords that hold a calf, my troubles,
I am not even mine eyelids' lord without thee.
Infallible god, thy statutes never to be moved,
are fixed as on a mountain.
Let me not profit, king, by gain of others.'

[8]'Whatever wrong we men commit against the race
Of heavenly ones, O Varuṇa, whatever law

[1] IV. 4. 3; IX. 73. 4, 7. [2] VI. 67. 5; VII. 87. 3; Macdonell, VM., p. 23.
[3] VII. 60. 1, 3. [4] I. 24. 13; 25. 13; V. 62. 4.
[5] VII. 89. 3; Griswold, RV., p. 123. [6] Macdonell, VR., p. 603[b].
[7] II. 28. 5, 6–9.
[8] VII. 89. 5; Griswold, RV., p. 123; for other examples see, VII. 86. 5; II. 28. 5[a], 9[a-b]; V. 85. 7-8; I. 24. 9, 14.

Of thine we here have broken through thoughtlessness,
For that transgression do not punish us, O God!'

Merciful to penitents, he is angry with those who transgress his laws,[1] and his punishment of the sinful is as severe as his bounties are plentiful.[2] Through his grace even those who have sinned become his beloved.[3] He binds with fetters and inflicts disease and death on evil doers, while he frees those who humbly pray to him for forgiveness not only from their own sin but also from the sin committed by their fathers.[4] Every worshipper is Varuṇa's friend, but this friendship is broken by sin, which means the transgression of the law of Varuṇa.[5] The committing of sin also leads to another consequence besides losing Varuṇa's friendship, viz. the physical penalty of disease or death.[6] In particular, sin is committed by killing or cursing (I. 41. 8.), deceiving (II. 27. 16 b.c.), by gambling or cheating at gambling (II. 29. 5; V. 85. 8) and by inordinate indulgence in drink, anger or dice;[7] and his forgiveness is obtained by confession (VII. 86. 6; 88. 6; 89. 3 b.c.), prayer for remission of penalty (VII. 86. 5 b.c.), by oblations and sacrifices (I. 24. 14), and by hymns of praise.

The ordinances of Varuṇa are unchangeable and even the gods must follow them.[8] Hence, he is often called *dhṛtavrata* 'he whose ordinances are fixed'.[9] It appears certain that the moral law was held to be as unchangeable as the physical, although this is not expressly stated.

Varuṇa grants protection and happiness to his worshippers. 'Happy are they who experience the mercy of Varuṇa'[10] and continue in his ordinance;[11] for Varuṇa has a thousand boons to give.[12] He guards the thoughts of men,[13] grants

[1] VII. 86. 2, 3, 7; I. 24. 11, 14; I. 25. 2bc. [2] VII. 88. 1.
[3] V. 85. 8. [4] Macdonell, VR., p. 603b.
[5] VII. 88. 5; I. 25. 1-2; VII. 89. 5.
[6] VII. 86. 4; I. 24. 9. 12–15; II. 28. 7; cf. also Griswold, RV., p. 126.
[7] Griswold, RV., p. 127. [8] IV. 42. 1-2; V. 69. 4; VIII. 41. 7.
[9] I. 25. 8, 10 b.c. [10] VII. 86. 2.
[11] II. 28. 2. [12] VII. 88. 1. [13] VIII. 41. 1.

protection,[1] removes fear[2] and furnishes the singer with a wealthy patron.[3]

Through the development of Prajāpati as the creator and the supreme god in the later Vedas, the influence of Varuṇa waned, and probably through the discovered connexion *vāri* 'water' and *varṣ* 'to rain' on the one hand and Varuṇa on the other, in the post-Vedic period he retained only the dominion of waters and became more particularly the god of the sea.[4]

LITERATURE

Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 4–10, etc.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 61–72.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 22–9.
Muir, V, pp. 58–75.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 189–95, 202-3, 293–8, 336 n. 1.

### *The Sun-Gods*

There are in the *Ṛigveda* a certain number of gods who are called sun-gods, but opinion as regards the original nature of all of them is divided. These are Sūrya, Savitṛ, Mitra, Viṣṇu, Vivasvat and much less certainly Pūṣan and Bhaga. We will treat each of these gods separately in order.

There are a number of characteristics which are common to most of these gods, and identifications or inter-relations are also frequently found. They all possess great splendour, observe and supervise all creatures, lead the dead to where the righteous dwell, dispel darkness, shower blessings and make men sinless. Some at any rate like Savitṛ, Sūrya, and Pūṣan are the lords of all that moves or is stationary. They are all benevolent and generous, and malignant traits are altogether absent.[5] As examples of identifications we find that Savitṛ is said to become Pūṣan in V. 82. 5, while in III. 62. 9-10, they are thought of as being connected with each other. Savitṛ is also said to become Mitra by his laws[6] and is sometimes identified with Bhaga, but it is uncertain whether

[1] II. 28. 3; VII. 88. 6; VIII. 42. 2. [2] II. 28. 6, 10. [3] II. 28. 11.
[4] Griswold, RV., pp. 113-4; Macdonell, VR., p. 603b.
[5] cf. Hopkins, RI., p. 57. [6] V. 81. 4.

Bhaga here means the god Bhaga, or whether the word is used only as an epithet.[1] The name of Bhaga (the good god who bestows benefits, or the liberal god) is indeed often added to that of Savitṛ, so as to form the single expression *savitā bhagaḥ* or *bhagaḥ savitā*. But on the other hand, there are texts in which Savitṛ is distinguished from Mitra, Pūṣan and Bhaga and more particularly Sūrya.[2] Still each one of these gods possesses some distinctive feature or other.

### *Sūrya*

In the *Ṛigveda* there are ten entire hymns in which Sūrya is invoked.[3] The word is considered to be etymologically allied to the Greek word '*Ἥλιος*' and since it was the commonest designation of the physical sun, the Vedic god Sūrya has remained the most concrete and transparent of the solar deities.[4]

He is said to reveal the glory of the gods and especially that of Agni[5] and is often described as the eye of such gods[6] as Mitra, Varuṇa,[7] and Agni.[8] In the funeral hymn,[9] the eye of the dead man is asked to go to the sun ; and in the great cosmogonic hymn[10] the sun is thought of as born from the eye of the world-giant Puruṣa.[11] He is again described as the far-seeing, all-observing[12] spy of the whole world,[13] a witness of the good and evil deeds of men,[14] and as such is beseeched to declare men sinless to the Ādityas and Agni.[15] Deliverance from trouble and dishonour,[16] disease and evil dreams[17] as well as from guilt[18] is also often begged of him.

He drives in a car drawn by steeds which vary in number from one to seven.[19] He is sometimes spoken of as animate,

1 Hopkins, RI., p. 48 ; RV., VII. 38. 6.
2 cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 33. 3 Macdonell, VM., p. 30.
4 Macdonell, VR., p. 603[b] ; Griswold, RV., p. 266.
5 I. 115. 1 ; X. 7. 3. 6 VII. 77. 3. 7 VI. 51. 1 ; VII. 61. 1 ; 63. 1, b.c.
8 I. 115. 1 ; and cf. Griswold, RV., p. 267. 9 X. 16. 3. 10 X. 90. 13.
11 Griswold, RV., p. 267. 12 VII. 63. 1, 4. 13 IV. 13. 3.
14 VI. 51. 2. 15 VII. 62. 2. 16 I. 115 ; 6. VII. 60. 2. 17 X. 37. 4.
18 X. 37. 7 ; see also Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 29 ; VR., p. 603[b] ; Griswold, RV., p. 288.
19 VII. 63. 2 ; I. 50. 8-9 ; Griswold, RV., p. 269.

when he is called an eagle, a bull, or a steed;[1] and sometimes as inanimate, when he is described as a wheel, a gem, a variegated stone or a bright weapon.[2]

The extraordinarily plastic character of the Vedic mythology is well illustrated by the fact that Sūrya is sometimes described as the child of the dawn,[3] while at others as a lover following dawn, 'as a young man follows a maiden';[4] and in one place even as Dawn's husband.[5]

Sūrya is also the son of Dyaus,[6] but he is also described as generated by many gods, who having generated him, caused him to ascend the sky.[7] He dispels darkness,[8] illumines the whole world[9] and measures days and prolongs life.[10] He is also called the soul (*ātmā*) of all that moves or is stationary.

LITERATURE

Griswold, RV., pp. 269–70.
Macdonell, VR., p. 603; *Hymns*, pp. 29–31.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 40–6; and more particularly
Macdonell, VM., pp. 30–2.

### *Savitṛ*

Savitṛ is extolled in eleven whole hymns and in parts of others. He is pre-eminently a golden deity, his hands, his eyes, his tongue, his arms, as well as his garments and his car are repeatedly spoken of as golden.[11] This fact combined with the fact that 'most of the hymns composed for him are to accompany the sacrifice, either of the morning or of the evening',[12] makes it highly probable that the original conception of Savitṛ as a separate sun-god was based more particularly on the golden twilights of the morning and the evening and it is also probable that his very name Savitṛ which means 'the stimulator' was derived from the morning

1 VII. 63. 5; V. 47. 3; VII. 77. 3.
2 VII. 63. 2, 4; V. 47. 3; 63. 4; Griswold, RV., p. 269.
3 VII. 63. 3; 78. 3. 4 I. 115. 2. 5 VII. 75. 5. 6 X. 37. 1.
7 X. 72. 1; 88. 11. 8 VII. 63. 1; X. 37. 4. 9 VII. 13. 1; I. 50. 5.
10 I. 50. 7; VIII. 48. 7.
11 Macdonell, VM., p. 32. 12 Hopkins, RI., p. 46.

twilight which ushers in the day, since it is on the whole the more inspiring and impressive of the two. Macdonell[1] concludes that 'Savitṛ was originally an epithet of Indian origin applied to the sun as the great stimulator of life and motion in the world'.

Savitṛ is the god of mighty splendour (*amáti*) with which he illumines the air, heaven and earth.[2] He drives in his golden car with a golden pole,[3] drawn by brown, white-footed steeds[4] and raising his two golden arms aloft rouses and blesses all beings.[5] He observes fixed laws, while the waters and the wind are subject to his ordinance.[6] He is also, like Sūrya, implored to convey the dead to the abode of the righteous, to remove evil dreams and to drive away the demons and the sorcerers.[7] Like other mighty gods he is also called the Asura,[8] and once, the *prajāpati* of the world.[9] He resembles Soma in bestowing immortality upon the gods in general and the Ṛbhus in particular.

The most sacred stanza of the *Ṛigveda*,[10] which is to be recited at the beginning of the Vedic study and in every morning prayer by the orthodox Brāhman, is addressed to Savitṛ and for that reason called the *Sāvitrī*. It is also called the *Gāyatrī* from the metre in which it is composed. It runs as follows:

'May we attain that excellent
Glory of Savitṛ the god,
That he may stimulate our thoughts.'[11]

Why this particular stanza should have been chosen as the most sacred and revered for such a long time is obscure, and adequate explanation seems well nigh impossible.[12] As

1 'So far as dawn is concerned, Savitr is a "mythological synonym of Uṣas".'—Griswold, RV., p. 273.
2 Macdonell, VM., p. 34. 3 I. 35. 7-8. 4 I. 35. 2, 5.
5 I. 35. 5. 6 II. 38. 2; IV. 53. 3, 4; VI. 71. 1, 5.
7 IV. 53. 4; II. 38. 2. 8 X. 17. 4; V. 82. 5; I. 35. 10.
9 e.g., I. 35. 7. 10 IV. 53. 2, 54. 2; I. 110. 3; Griswold, RV., p. 275.
11 III. 62. 10.
12 cf. Hopkins, RI., pp. 46-7; and Whitney in Colebrooke's *Essays*, revised ed., II, p. 111.

compared with Sūrya, Savitṛ is a much more abstract deity. 'He is in the eyes of the Vedic poets the divine power of the sun personified, while Sūrya is the more concrete deity.'[1]

LITERATURE

Bergaigne, RV., III, pp. 38–64.
Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 120–34.
Kaegi, RV., p. 56.
Muir, V, pp. 162-70.

## *Mitra*

In the *Ṛigveda* Mitra, like Dyaus, is a waning god. He is invoked independently in only one hymn,[2] but often in association with Varuṇa. Although originally Mitra was undoubtedly a sun-god, in the *Ṛigveda* he hardly seems to have retained any trace of his individuality as a sun-god, so much so that it is questioned whether he was at all a sun-god in the beginning.[3] But in our opinion there is a very easy and natural explanation for this. As we have seen, the Iranian god of the same name unmistakably referred to the beneficent power of the sun. But the word *mitra* in both the *Ṛigveda* and the old *Avesta* (and therefore presumably in the Indo-Iranian form of language) meant nothing more than a 'friend', or at the most 'faithfulness'. So long as the conception of this god was new, his connexion with the physical sun was maintained, but since the meaning of the word itself had no definite and direct reference to anything physical in the sun, the god began to lose his individuality. Now, had this god originated in the middle of the Ṛigvedic period, when the people were capable of conceiving a purely abstract deity (since his name meant nothing else but the abstract quality of being friendly or faithful) he would have

1 Macdonell, VM., p. 34. cf. also Oldenberg, RV., pp. 64-5.

2 III. 59.

3 Griswold thinks that 'on the whole, while an indefinite luminous character cannot be denied to the Ṛigvedic Mitra, the original I.I. Mitra must be assumed to have been the apotheosis of the friendly compact.'—RV., pp. 120-1.

probably become a consistent abstract deity representing friendliness, or faithfulness, because the word *mitra* was not at all connected with the physical phenomenon of the sun or even with any of his apparent physical aspects such as light or heat. But the Indo-Iranian people, as we know, had not developed the capacity of forming abstract deities. Thus the physical basis being uncertain or forgotten and the time not being ripe for a purely abstract conception, Mitra began to lose his individuality as a sun-god. In the Persian religion he regained his original character after a time, but in the Vedic he became, consistently with the meaning of his name, a friendly and a guardian god. In this character he was easily likened to Varuṇa, who in the main possesses the same qualities, and thus became a co-partner in the invocations of the Vedic poets. Consequently, Mitra retains but few individual traits, and when invoked with Varuṇa, as is very frequently the case, he shares practically all his attributes and functions. Nor is the case any different in the one hymn in which he alone is invoked. In this way he severs all connexion with the sun and becomes practically identical with Varuṇa in all his characteristics.

In the *Ṛigveda*, Mitra is the Āditya who rouses men to action and, like Varuṇa, supports both Earth and Heaven and watches the people with steady eye.[1] Like Varuṇa, the law of Mitra is also referred to and like him Mitra protects worshippers from death and defeat.[2] He is also the 'king' (*rājā*), the 'disposer' (*sukṣatraḥ*), and a desire is expressed to be in his favour and grace (*tasya vayam sumatau... saumanase syāma*).[3] To him the five peoples yield submission; it is he who sustains all gods.[4]

LITERATURE

Barth, RI., p. 17.
Bergaigne, RV., III, pp. 110–29.
Bloomfield, RV., pp. 132ff. and *passim*.
Griswold, RV., pp. 116–21.

[1] III. 59. 5. 1. [2] III. 59. 2. [3] III. 59. 4. [4] ibid., 8.

Hopkins, RI., p. 71.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 22–4 ; VM., pp. 29-30.
Muir, V, pp. 68-69, 71.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 190–2.

### *Viṣṇu*

Among the sun-gods of the *Ṛigveda*, Viṣṇu occupies a subordinate position, but as one who later becomes one of the two greatest gods of modern Hinduism, he is of the utmost importance. In the *Ṛigveda* he is addressed only in five or six independent hymns.

His 'three steps or strides' is his chief characteristic. It is often referred to and is almost unanimously believed to refer to the three stages of the sun, viz. the rising, the culminating and the setting. These steps, two of which are visible to men, but the third or the highest is beyond the flight of birds or mortal ken,[1] he took for the benefit of men. So also the epithets *urugāya*, 'wide-spreading' and *urukrama* 'wide-striding', as well as the verb *vi-kram* are almost entirely limited to Viṣṇu. Macdonell[2] remarks: 'Viṣṇu's three strides undoubtedly refer to the course of the sun as it passes through the three divisions of the world: earth, air and heaven. Viṣṇu is further said to set in motion his ninety steeds (i.e. days) with their four names (i.e. seasons), in allusion to the 360 days of the solar year. Thus Viṣṇu seems to have been originally a personification of the sun in its activity of traversing the universe.'

He is constantly associated with Indra and especially in the latter's fight with the demon Vṛtra, Viṣṇu is expressly called Indra's intimate friend.[3] They conjointly produced Sūrya, Uṣas, and Agni,[4] created the wide air and spread out the spaces.[5] He also shares the other attributes common to the Vedic gods of being a liberal and a bountiful guardian,

[1] I. 155. 5: VII. 99. 2; Macdonell, VM., p. 38.
[2] Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 34.
[3] I. 22. 19. [4] VII. 99. 4. [5] VI. 69. 5.

a generous deliverer and an ordainer.[1] The reasons why Viṣṇu became so important a god of Hinduism we will discuss later.

LITERATURE

Bloomfield, RV., pp. 168ff.
Griswold, RV., pp. 282–5.
Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 236ff. ; 359ff.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 56-7.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 34-5.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 37–42.
Muir, IV, pp. 63–88, 121–9, 298.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 227–30.

### *Vivasvat*

This god is not celebrated in any separate hymn and his attributes have to be collected from passages scattered throughout the *Ṛigveda*. He is called the father of the Aśvins,[2] of Yama[3] and also that of Manu the ancestor of the human race according to the sacred literature of the Hindus, but this occurs only in the later Saṁhitās.[4] His fatherhood of Manu is repeatedly found in the post-Vedic literature. In the *Ṛigveda* the gods also are once spoken of as the offspring (*janimā*) of Vivasvat.[5] Indra is connected with Vivasvat and Varuṇa also is mentioned with him. The word is derived from the root *vas*, with *vi* 'to shine forth', and therefore means 'brilliant' when it occurs as an adjective in connexion with Agni and Uṣas.[6]

In the *Yajurveda* and the Brāhmaṇas, Vivasvat is called an Āditya and in post-Vedic literature it becomes a common name of the sun. We have already seen that probably Vivasvat originally represented the rising sun, but soon became the glorious first man who prepared the *soma*-drink, and this position appears to have been attained as early as the Indo-Iranian period.[7]

[1] VII. 40. 5 ; VIII. 25. 12 ; III. 55. 10; I. 155. 4; I. 156. 4. [2] X. 17. 2.
[3] X. 14. 5; 17. 1. [4] TS., VI. 5, 6. 2; *Sat.*, III. 1, 3, 4.
[5] X. 63. 1. Hillebrandt, VM., I, p. 488. [6] Macdonell, VM., p. 43.
[7] cf. Oldenberg, RV., p. 122. '*Es ist klar, dass der Name Vivasvat auf den*

### *Pūṣan*

Pūṣan is celebrated in eight hymns, five of which occur in the sixth book, the book of the Bhāradvāja family. From this Hopkins thinks that Pūṣan had become a special war-god of this family.[1] He also adds: 'Not to speak of the priestly view, there are at least two Pūṣans in the *Ṛigveda* itself.' One is merely a war-leader (VI. 48. 19), while the other is 'distinguished by all divine attributes' (X. 92. 13).[2] This double character appears, however, to be due to the fact that 'his individuality is very indistinct and his anthropomorphic traits scanty'.[3]

His name is derived from the root *puṣ*, 'to cause to thrive',[4] and means a 'prosperer' or the 'bestower of prosperity',[5] personifying probably the bountiful power of the sun.

His chief characteristics are, however, pastoral and therefore he may be called a pastoral deity. He is the god who looks after the cattle and brings them back when gone astray;[6] he protects and guards the steeds;[7] he is the strong friend of abundance, the strong lord and increaser of nourishment,[8] and he directs the furrow.

Other peculiar features of this deity are: his car is drawn by goats instead of horses;[9] he has braided hair like Rudra,[10] and a beard;[11] he is the 'deliverer' (*vimocana*) or 'the son of deliverance' (*vimuco napāt*). He is the special guardian of paths and, knowing the ways of heaven, he conducts the dead to the abode of their fathers.[12] Like other gods he is also described as the *asura*,[13] the resistless who transcends mortals and is equal to the gods in glory,[14] the powerful,[15] the beneficent bestower of all blessings.[16]

Although it cannot be regarded as clearly established, the

*menschlichen Opferer von dem Gott übertragen sein.*'—Hillebrandt, VM., I, p. 478.

[1] Hopkins, RI., p. 53. [2] ibid., p. 50f. [3] Macdonell, VM., p. 35.
[4] ibid., p. 37. [5] Hopkins, RI., p. 50. [6] VI. 54. 5.
[7] VI. 53. 9. [8] X. 26. 7-8. [9] I. 38. 4. VI. 53. 3, 4.
[10] VI. 55. 2. [11] X. 26. 7. [12] Macdonell, VR., p. 604a. [13] V. 51. 11.
[14] VI. 48. 15, 19. [15] I. 138. 1. [16] I. 138; 2; 42. 6.

conclusion that he originally represented the sun is very probable, since he shares a number of characteristics in common with Sūrya.[1] He sees all creatures,[2] beholds the universe,[3] and has his abode in heaven;[4] he is 'the lord of all things moving and stationary',[5] the wooer of his mother and the lover of his sister,[6] and frequently receives the epithet 'glowing' (*āghṛṇi*). This is the opinion of Macdonell,[7] and Hopkins[8] says, 'with Pūṣan, the bestower of prosperity, appears an ancient side of sun-worship'. Oldenberg[8] thinks that he was in the beginning the god of the paths and compares him with the Greek god Hermes, while Griswold[9] expresses the view that he was originally the countryman's deity and just as Agni and Soma were *Brāhman* gods and Indra a *Kṣatriya* god, so Pūṣan was probably a *Vaiśya* god.

LITERATURE

Bergaigne, RV., II, pp. 420–30.
Bloomfield, RV., pp. 170-1.
Griswold, RV., pp. 278–82.
Hillebrandt, VM., I, p. 456.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 50–3.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 31-2.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 35–7; Oldenberg, RV., pp. 230–3.
Muir, V, pp. 171–80.

### *Bhaga*

Wallis[10] has expressed the opinion that, judging from the *Ṛigveda*, Bhaga would seem to be a survival from an ancient sun-worship, but most authors either neglect this question or

[1] Bloomfield, RV., II, p. 420f.; Bergaigne identified Pūṣan with Soma, ibid., pp. 429-30.
[2] III. 62. 9.
[3] VI. 58. 2; II. 40. 5.
[4] II. 40. 4.
[5] VII. 60. 2; I. 89. 5.
[6] VI. 55. 4-5.
[7] Macdonell, VM., pp. 35–7.
[8] RI., pp. 230–3. Professor Bloomfield also takes the same view.—RV., pp. 170–3.
[9] RV., p. 282.
[10] *Cosmogony of the Ṛigveda*, p. 11.

do not agree with Wallis. Hopkins, although he puts Bhaga under the heading of the sun-gods, expressly states, that 'there is in fact no reason why Bhaga should be regarded as a sun-god, except for the formal identification of him as an Āditya; but neither Sūrya nor Savitṛ is originally an Āditya'.[1] He thinks that Bhaga was a sun-god merely because the sun (Savitṛ) was called *bhaga*.[2] Hillebrandt[3] remarks: '*An einigen Stellen bezeichnet er* (Bhaga) *den Sonnengott;*[4] *aber ich würde mit Bezug auf die weite Verbreitung des Wortes in arischen Sprachen glauben, dass hier kein ursprünglicher Gedanke, sondern eine indische, durch die häufige Nachbarschaft von Savitṛ entstandene Übertragung vorliegt.*'

The fact is that our information with regard to this god is extremely scanty. There is only one whole hymn[5] and a part of another[6] addressed to him, and although the word is found quite often in other parts of the *Ṛigveda*, it is not always clear whether it is used attributively or as a proper noun. This being so, we cannot draw any certain conclusion from the fact that the word is frequently connected with Savitṛ.[7] Still it must be noted that besides his connexion with Savitṛ in name, there are passages in which he appears to represent the sun. The eye of Bhaga, whose sister is dawn[8] and who possesses a path[9] (like the sun), is said to be adorned with rays,[10] and Yāska actually describes him as presiding over the forenoon.[11]

The most prominent characteristic of this god is found in the meaning of his name itself. Bhaga means a 'giver', 'a distributor' of blessings but more particularly wealth in a general sense. He is also called *vidhartā*[12] or *vibhaktā*,[13]

[1] Hopkins, RI., p. 53f. [2] ibid., p. 56.
[3] Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 93.
[4] ibid., note 3, RV., I. 136. 2: *Cakṣur bhagasya* (=Sun); 123. 5: *Uṣā bhagasya svasṛ.*
[5] VII. 41. [6] VII. 38. 6; *savitā bhagovā.*
[7] See Bloomfield, RV., pp. 39-41. [8] I. 123-5.
[9] III. 54. 14. [10] I. 136. 2. [11] *Nir.*, XII. 13.
[12] VII. 41. 2. [13] V. 46. 6; Macdonell, VM., p. 45.

words which carry the same sense of 'a distributor' or 'a dispenser'; and is sometimes invoked as *bhagavat* 'one full of bounty'. It is also noteworthy that Puraṁdhi, who in all probability was the goddess of abundance, is more closely associated with Bhaga than any other god of the *Ṛigveda*.[1] Hillebrandt, however, regards her as a goddess of activity.[2]

### *Ādityas*

This is a group of gods invoked in six whole hymns and in parts of two others. The number is uncertain, being given as 7 or 8 in the *Ṛigveda* (IX. 114. 3; X. 72. 8), but as 12 in *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and later.[3] A list of six[4] includes Mitra, Aryaman, Bhaga, Varuṇa, Dakṣa and Aṁśa. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[5] gives the number as twelve and identifies them with the twelve months of the year. Following this identification, in later Sanskrit literature they regularly become twelve sun-gods, of whom Viṣṇu is one and the greatest.[6] The others then are supposed to be Sūrya, Mārtaṇḍa (probably meaning the setting sun) Vivasvat, Savitṛ; and the twelfth was perhaps Indra.[7]

Varuṇa is the chief of the Ādityas and is frequently called *the* Āditya. Whenever two Ādityas are mentioned, Varuṇa and Mitra are meant excepting once, when Indra takes the place of Mitra. Aryaman makes the number three, Savitṛ and Bhaga five and Dakṣa, occurring only once, forms the sixth.[8] They are invoked as a group and so frequently appear with other group deities, such as the Maruts, Vasus, etc., sometimes the word is used in a very wide sense, meaning the gods in general.[9]

'In the aggregate sense they are the gods of celestial light, without representing any particular manifestation of that

[1] ibid., p. 124, and references. Oldenberg, RV., p. 63.
[2] WZKM., III, pp. 188–94; 259–73.
[3] 8 also found in AV, VIII. 9–21 and TB., I. 1. 8. 1.
[4] II. 27. 1. [5] VI. 1. 2. 8; XI. 6. 3. 8.
[6] Macdonell, VM., p. 44; Muir, IV, pp. 117–21.
[7] Macdonell, loc. cit.; Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 97.
[8] Macdonell, loc. cit. [9] Grassman, s.v. *Ādityas*.

light, such as sun, moon and stars, or dawn,[1] being characterized by such epithets as, 'bright' (*sucayaḥ*), 'golden' (*hiraṇyayāḥ*), 'pure' (*dhārapūtāḥ*).[2] They hate falsehood and punish sin and they can see the good and evil in men's hearts and distinguish the honest man from the deceitful.[3] They bestow many blessings, such as light, long life and good sons,[4] and ward off sickness and distress.[5]

Oldenberg[6] had put forward the theory that the Ādityas originally represented nothing else but sun, moon and the five planets, and identified them with the Iranian Amesha Spentas, thus carrying the idea back to at least the Indo-Iranian period. He had based his conclusion on the similarity between the positions occupied by Varuṇa and Ahura Mazda in the two groups, the abstract nature of the Amesha Spentas and Bhaga, Aṁśa and Dakṣa, and the supposition that the characteristic number of both the groups is seven. The conclusion, which appears to have been supported by Griswold,[7] does not, however, seem probable for the following reasons:—

(1) There is no common name between the two groups, even Mitra not being an Amesha Spenta.[8]

(2) The belief in the Ādityas being seven in number is not distinctly old or characteristic.[9]

(3) They are mentioned as seven only once in *Ṛigveda*, IX. 114. 3.[10]

(4) There is no real similarity between their natures, since it is not true that the Indian Ādityas are on the whole abstract as the Amesha Spentas certainly are.

(5) The theory that Mitra originally represented the moon is well nigh exploded.[11]

[1] Macdonell, loc. cit. [2] Macdonell, V.M., p. 45.
[3] II. 27. 3, 4; VIII. 18. 15. [4] II 27. [5] VIII. 18. 10.
[6] RV., pp. 185–95. [7] RV., pp. 145–7. [8] Oldenberg, VM., p. 44.
[9] Macdonell, JRAS., XXVII, p. 948; and Griswold, RV., pp. 146–7 and 146, n. 1.
[10] See Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp 97, 102–5.
[11] cf. Bloomfield, RV., pp. 133–6.

(6) Though the identity of the Ādityas and Amesha Spentas has been generally accepted since Roth put it forward,[1] it has been rejected by some distinguished Avestan scholars such as Spiegel[2] and Harlez.[3]

(7) Lastly, with reference to the similarity between Varuṇa and Ahura Mazda, Hillebrandt remarks:— '*. . . ich kann. . . sagen, dass die ganze Argumentation auf schwachen Füssen steht. . . .*[4] *Die indische und iranische Religiongeschichte haben in diesem Fall keinen Berührungspunkt.*'[5] The name is clearly a matronymic formation from that of their mother, Aditi, meaning the goddess of 'boundlessness'.

LITERATURE

Griswold, RV., pp. 138–49.
Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 1–110.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 53–6.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 43–6.
Muir, V, pp. 54–7.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 185–9, 286–7.

### *Aryaman, Aṁśa and Dakṣa*

Of these twelve Ādityas, those that have not been already dealt with are: Indra, Aryaman, Aṁśa, Dakṣa and Mārtaṇḍa. Indra will be dealt with later on, while, since we know almost nothing about Martaṇḍa except that Aditi had thrown away and then brought him back, we may neglect him altogether. So we have only Aryaman, Aṁśa and Dakṣa who need be considered.

The name Aryaman is Indo-Iranian as it is found in the *Avesta*. In the *Ṛigveda* he is mentioned about a hundred times, but in the *Naighuntaka* which gives the list of gods he

[1] ZDMG., VI, pp. 68ff. [2] AP., p. 199.
[3] JA., 1878, II, pp. 129ff; Macdonell, VM., p. 44.
[4] Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 103. [5] op. cit., p. 103.

is passed over in silence. The word is sometimes used in the appellative sense of 'comrade', and thus the conception of him 'seems to have differed but little from that of the greater Āditya Mitra, "Friend".'[1]

The word Aṁśa as the name of a god occurs only thrice, and as meaning 'a share', 'portion', 'an apportioner' or 'a distributor' is almost synonymous with *bhaga*. As the name of a god the word Dakṣa occurs less than half a dozen times, but is used more frequently as an adjective meaning 'clever', 'dexterous'. We have however much more information about him than the above two Ādityas. He is referred to with other Ādityas and in the cosmogonic hymn (X. 72. 4, 5)[2] we find the words: 'Dakṣa was born of Aditi and so was Aditi born of Dakṣa. Gods were born from her afterwards.' At X. 5, 7.[3] again, the existent as well as the non-existent is said to be born from the womb of Aditi, the birth-place of Dakṣa. Thus Dakṣa and Aditi were probably regarded as universal parents.[4]

### *Uṣas*

Uṣas, the goddess of dawn, is the only female deity of the *Ṛigveda* who is frequently invoked. She is celebrated in about twenty hymns. The physical phenomena being constantly present, personification is here but slightly developed. Although she is not entirely disconnected with sacrifice,[5] she has no place in the *soma*-sacrifice and she is a poetical rather than a religious creation. From the point of view of lyrical poetry, there are no two opinions with regard to the merit of the Uṣas-hymns. 'Nothing in religious poetry more graceful or delicate than the Vedic dawn-hymns has ever been written,' says Hopkins;[6] while Macdonell remarks that she is 'the most graceful creation of Vedic poetry, and there is no more charming figure in the

[1] VM., p. 45.

[2] *Aditer dakṣo ajāyata dakṣātvaditiḥ pari .... tam devā anvajāyanta ....*

[3] *Asacca sacca parame vyoman dakṣasya janmanyaditer upasthe.*

[4] See Macdonell, VM., p. 45f. for the whole of the above.

[5] Bergaigne, RV., I, p. 243. [6] Hopkins, RI., p. 75.

religious lyrics of any other literature'.[1] Bloomfield,[2] in proving his position that the religion of the Veda is of a hieratic nature, levels rather strong criticism against the Uṣas-hymns; but it may still be said that on the whole 'the brightness of her form has not been obscured by priestly speculation, nor has the imagery as a rule been marred by references to the sacrifice'.[3] 'In the laudation of Varuṇa, the fancy of the poet exhausts itself in lofty imagery, and reaches the topmost height of Vedic religious lyric. In the praise of Dawn, it descends not lower than to interweave beauty with dignity of utterance'.[4]

'[5] This light has come, of all the lights the fairest:
The brilliant brightness has been born effulgent.
Urged onward for god Savitar's uprising,
Night now has yielded up her place to morning, 1.
Bright leader of glad sounds she shines effulgent:
Widely she has unclosed for us her portals.
Pervading all the world she shows her riches:
Dawn has awakened every living creature. 4.
Men lying on the ground she wakes to action:
Some rise to seek enjoyment of great riches,
Some, seeing little, to behold the distant:
Dawn has awakened every living creature, 5.
One for dominion, and for fame another,
Another is aroused for winning greatness;
Another seeks the goal of varied nurture.
Dawn has awakened every living creature. 6.
Arise! the vital breath again has reached us:
Darkness has gone away and light is coming.
She leaves a pathway for the sun to travel
We have arrived where men prolong existence. 10.

[1] Macdonell, VR., p. 604a. [2] RV., pp. 64ff.

[3] Macdonell, VR., p. 604a; see also Hillebrandt, VM., II, p. 25 and Oldenberg, RV., pp. 236ff.

[4] Hopkins, RI., p. 3. '*Ces hymnes sont presque tous au nombre des plus poétiques que renferme le Ṛigveda.*'—Bergaigne, RV., I, p. 242.

[5] I. 113; as translated by Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 38–40.

[1] Looking on all created things, the goddess
Shines far and wide, facing the eye of Sūrya
Awaking every living soul to motion.
She has aroused the voice of every thinker. 9.
Born newly again and again though ancient,
Herself adorning with the selfsame colour,
The goddess wears away the life of mortals
Like stakes diminished by a skilful gambler.' 10.

Uṣas is said to be the daughter born in the sky,[2] or simply the daughter or beloved *priyā* of heaven.[3] The night is also spoken of as the daughter of the sky (X. 127. 8) and hence the dawn is often called the sister of night (I. 113. 2, 3; 124. 8; X. 127. 3). They also are invoked together.[4] Thus they are spoken of as *samānabandhū*,[5] or called the two divine maidens, the daughters of the sky.[6] On the other hand Uṣas' hostility to night is quite clear, since she is the dispeller of darkness which is the special robe of night (I. 113. 14).

She is said to possess a brilliant,[7] bright,[8] shining[9] car and to be borne on one or a hundred chariots,[10] drawn by ruddy steeds or by ruddy kine or bulls,[11] 'probably representing the ruddy rays of morning light'.[12]

It is natural that she should be associated with the sun, Agni and the Aśvins. Like the sun, she dispels the hated darkness,[13] illumines the ends of the sky,[14] opens the gates of heaven[15] and makes manifest all beings.[16] Sūrya again is said to be her lover,[17] her husband,[18] as well as her son.[19] She brings the eye of gods,[20] and has opened up paths for

[1] I. 92. [2] VI. 65. 1. [3] I. 30. 22; 46. 1.
[4] cf. Bergaigne, RV., I, p. 248f; RV., 186. I. 4; II. 31. 5. b.c.
[5] I. 113. 2. [6] X. 110. 6; 70. 6. [7] I. 123. 7.
[8] III. 61. 2. [9] VII. 78. 1. [10] VII. 78. 1; I. 48. 7.
[11] VII. 75. 6; I. 124. 11; V. 80. 3.
[12] Macdonell, VM., p. 47; Bergaigne, I, p. 247.
[13] VI. 64. 3; VII. 75. 1; V. 80. 6.
[14] I. 92. 11. [15] I. 113. 4. [16] VII. 80. 1.
[17] I. 92. 11; 115. 2. [18] VII. 75. 5; V. 5. 13.
[19] VII. 78. 3. [20] VIII. 77. 3.

Sūrya to travel.[1] Like Agni, she wards off evil spirits[2] and chases enemies away.[3] Agni is also her lover,[4] probably because she causes him to be kindled.[5] Dawn awakens the Aśvins, her friends,[6] who are said to accompany her.[7] They are once spoken of as having become her husbands,[8] *patī bhavathaḥ sūryāyāḥ*.

She is said to have been generated by Indra or discovered by Bṛhaspati or the ancient father.[9] Soma made the dawns bright at their birth and the wives of a good husband.[10]

The dawn may be taken to be the unchanging symbol of the day of the Vedic poets and hence we read of the dawns gone by and the endless number of dawns that are to come hereafter. Her sameness from day to day naturally led the poets to think of her as immortal.[11]

> She the goddess, Dawn has flushed in former ages,
> And here today the bounteous maiden flushes.
> So also may she flush in days hereafter.
> With powers her own she fares, immortal, ageless.[12]

She is *maghonī*, the bountiful goddess, and as such is repeatedly prayed to grant wealth.[13] She also discloses the treasures concealed in darkness and, distributing liberally, she assigns to every man his share.[14] She grants protection and long life.[15]

The word *dakṣinā* is often found in the Uṣas-hymns. This fact led Bergaigne and Bloomfield to the conclusion that the word even in the *Ṛigveda* meant 'sacrificial fee'. In doing this Bloomfield sets aside Max Müller's interpretation 'clever' rather indignantly, and to demonstrate the correctness of his position, considers the connexion between

[1] I. 113. 16. [2] VII. 75. 1.
[3] V. 80. 5 [4] I. 60. 1; VIII. 10. 1.
[5] I. 113. 9. On her relation with the sacrifice see Bergaigne, RV., I, p. 24. His opinion seems to us to be rather far-fetched.
[6] IV. 52. 2, 3. [7] I. 183. 2. [8] IV. 43. 6.
[9] II. 12. 7; X. 68. 9; VII. 76. 4. [10] VI. 39. 3; 44. 23. [11] I. 30. 20.
[12] Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 39; I. 113, 13; see Griswold, RV., p. 249f.
[13] VIII. 81. 4. [14] I. 123. 3, 4, 6. [15] I. 30. 22; 48. 1.

Uṣas and the sacrifice at some length. But Bloomfield appears to have gone too far. If Max Müller's interpretation cannot be made applicable everywhere, neither can that of Bloomfield be so applied.

If the word *dakṣiṇā* does in many places mean the 'sacrificial fee', in at least a few passages in the Uṣas-hymns it must be translated by some such word as 'clever', or 'ready' or 'liberal giver'.[1] The whole position is, however, obscure, but at the same time an attempt to clear this obscurity would be out of place here.

LITERATURE

Bergaigne, RV., I, pp. 241–50.
Griswold, RV., pp. 244–54.
Hillebrandt, VM., II, pp. 23–33.
Kaegi, RV., pp. 52–4.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 35–40; VM., pp. 46–9.
Muir, V, pp. 181–98.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 236ff.

## *Aśvins*

The Aśvins, the twin gods, occupy a prominent place in the *Ṛigveda*, being invoked in more than fifty[2] entire hymns. This name of theirs is usually taken to mean 'those who possess horses',[3] but Yāska,[4] besides mentioning this interpretation,[5] gives another derivation. He says, 'they are called Aśvins because they pervade everything, the one with moisture, the other with light' (*aśvinau=yad vyaśnuvāte sarvaṁ rasena anyo jyotiṣā anyaḥ*).[6] They are also often called, as we have already seen, the Nāsatyas, meaning either 'not untrue' (*na-asatya*),[7] or 'savers' from the *nas* as found in Gothic *nasyan*.[8]

[1] e.g., I. 123, 1, 5. [2] Fifty-four.—Griswold, RV., p. 255.
[3] cf. Bergaigne, RV., II, p. 460 and n. 3. [4] *Nir.* XII. 1.
[5] As one suggested by Aurṇabhāva. [6] ibid.
[7] Macdonell, VM., p. 49; for criticism of this derivation see Bergaigne, RV., II, pp. 507-8. Bergaigne rejects it.
[8] Brunnhofer, *Von Aral bis zur Ganga*, p. 99.

They are inseparable twins[1] and are thus compared with various twin objects such as two vultures on a tree, two priests reciting hymns, two women of lovely complexion, a couple (i.e. husband and wife), two ships, ducks, dogs, deer, falcons, etc., with the twin organs of the body such as two eyes, ears, nostrils, hands, feet, etc.[2] On the other hand, there are a few passages which speak of them as separate. Thus they are said to be born separately (*nānā jātau*),[3] or here and there *iheha jātā*, one being called a victorious prince and the other, the son of heaven.[4] We also find a passage in the *Nirukta*,[5] where 'one is called the son of night, the other the son of dawn' and the Nāsayta occurs in the singular in the *Ṛigveda* itself (*nāsatyāya*). These passages possibly point to their having been 'originally separate'.[6] They are the sons of Heaven,[7] or of Vivasvat and Śaraṇyu, daughter of Tvaṣṭṛ;[8] or have Sindhu, probably the ocean, as their mother, being once called *sindhumātarā*.[9]

Since the time of their appearance is the early dawn,[10] when 'darkness still stands among the ruddy cows',[11] and since Uṣas is said to wake them up[12] and they are said to follow Uṣas in their car,[13] their time is considered to be between dawn and sunrise.[14] Some passages, however, show that it may have been before the dawn or even in the evening. Thus Savitṛ is said to set their car in motion before the dawn[15] and they are invoked to come to the offering in the evening or at sunset.[16] But the former conception is of more common occurrence, and in addition to their close connexion with Uṣas, their association with the sun and amorous relations with Sūryā 'daughter of Sūrya'

1 III. 39. 3; X. 17. 2.
2 All these comparisons are found together in one hymn, II, 39.
3 V. 73. 4. 4 I. 181. 4.
5 XII. 2; Macdonell, VM., p. 49. 6 ibid.
7 I. 182. 1; X. 61. 4. 8 X. 17. 2. 9 I. 46. 2.
10 Macdonell, VM., p. 50; Muir, V, p. 238f.
11 X. 61. 4. 12 VIII. 9. 17. 13 VIII. 5. 2.
14 Macdonell, VM, p. 50. 15 I. 34. 10. 16 VIII. 22. 14; V. 76. 3.

the sun, make it very probable that their original bases lay in some early morning phenomena. Thus, Uṣas appears to have been meant when their 'sister' is spoken of.[1] Like Uṣas and the sun, they also dispel darkness and are sometimes said to chase away evil spirits.[2] They are the two chosen husbands of the maiden Sūryā,[3] who mounts their car;[4] they possess her as their own.[5] Of this marriage, Sāyaṇa[6] gives the following account: 'Savitṛ wished to give his daughter, Sūryā, (in marriage) to King Soma. But since all the gods wished to obtain her hand, they came to an agreement, that they should run a race with the sun for their goal and that Sūryā should belong to him who won the race. In that race, the Aśvins were the victors, and thus having won Sūryā, mounted their car.' There are passages, however, where she appears as the wife of another. Thus in one place Savitṛ is said to have given Sūryā to her husband,[7] when Soma was the wooer and the Aśvins, the two friends of the bridegroom (*varā*),[8] while in another, the gods are said to have given Pūṣan to Sūryā.[9] But on the whole, the Aśvins are much more closely connected with Sūryā than any other god, and it is probably this relation that gives them their characteristic of furthering conjugal relations. Thus, they can give a husband to a maid,[10] or wife to a man who is their favourite;[11] they can also give a child to a eunuch and make a barren cow yield milk or bestow fertility on a bride.[12]

They are frequently called *dasra*, 'wondrous', and like the dawn and the sun, they are bright,[13] lords of lustre, of

[1] I. 180. 2; with regard to Sūryā. Griswold remarks: 'Bloomfield (RV., pp. 114-5), and Hillebrandt (VM., II, pp. 41ff.; III, p. 386) have made it practically certain that Sūryā is to be identified with Uṣas.'

[2] III. 39. 3; VIII. 35. 16.

[3] VII. 69. 4; IV. 43. 6; VIII. 8. 10. [4] VI. 63. 5. [5] VII. 68. 3.

[6] Comment on passage I. 116. 17.

[7] cf. the Lettish song quoted in ERE., XII, p. 103a.

[8] X. 85. 9. [9] VI. 58. 4. [10] X. 39. 3. [11] I. 116. 1.

[12] I. 112. 3; X. 184. 2. They are also said to place the productive germ in all creatures; I. 157. 5; see Muir, V, p. 245.

[13] VII. 68. 1.

golden brilliancy, as well as honey-hued[1] and red (*rudrā*).[2] The epithets *rudravartani* 'having a red path',[3] and *hiraṇya-vartani* 'having a golden path'[4] are particularly applied to them: and their car, all golden,[5] sunlike,[6] thousand-rayed,[7] swifter than thought,[8] of a golden canopy (*hiraṇyatvak*),[9] has, unlike the car of any other god, three wheels,[10] one of which was lost as they were coming to the wedding of Sūryā.[11] They are also themselves very agile,[12] and are described as being swift as thought or an eagle.[13] They are mighty, strong,[14] of great wisdom, and possess occult power (*māyā*).[15] Possessing many forms (I. 117. 9) they are handsome[16] and young;[17] but like Uṣas they are both old.[18]

Like other gods, the Aśvins are also fond of *soma* and are often invited to drink it, but their connexion with *madhu* 'honey' is extraordinarily close, as many epithets formed from the word *madhu* are more or less exclusively applied to them. Thus they alone are said to be 'fond of honey' (*madhūyu*,[19] *mādhvī*[20]) or 'drinkers of honey' (*madhupā*),[21] while their car is described as honey-hued (*madhuvarṇa*),[22] or 'honey-bearing' (*madhu-vāhana*).[23] 'They bestrew the sacrifice and the worshipper with their honey;[24] they poured out a hundred jars of honey;'[25] their

1 VIII. 26. 6. 2 V. 75. 3. 3 Pischel, *Vedische Studien*, I, p. 55.
4 VIII. 8; 1. V. 75. 2, 3.
5 VIII. 5. 28; 22. 5; IV. 44. 4, 5; I. 80. 1; I. 47. 9.
6 VIII. 8. 2. 7 I. 119. 1. 8 I. 117. 2.
9 V. 77. 3; and also *Sūryatvak*; see Bergaigne, RV., II., p. 432.
10 I. 118. 1. 11 X. 85. 15. 12 VI. 63. 5.
13 VIII. 22. 16; V. 78. 4. 14 VI. 62. 5; X. 24. 4.
15 VIII. 8. 2; X. 24. 4; VI. 63. 5. 16 VI. 62. 5; 63. 1. 17 VII. 67. 10.
18 VII. 62. 5; for Uṣas see III. 61. 1. 19 Macdonell, VM., p. 50.
20 I. 184. 4; IV. 434; V. 75. 1; VII. 65. 4, 7; 71. 2.
21 Macdonell, VM., p. 50. 22 op. cit., p. 49.
23 I. 157. 3; see also I. 182. 2.
24 I. 122. 3; 157. 4. Oldenberg (RV., p. 208, n. 4), thinks this refers to the morning dew (VM., p. 54, n. 8), while Bergaigne translating the word *madhu* '*liqueur*' identifies it with *soma*. '*Sans doute le terme* madhu, "*liqueur*", *implique l'idée du Soma.*'—RV., II, pp. 434–9.
25 I. 117. 6.

very skins are said to be filled with it[1] and sometimes they are compared with bees, to whom they give their honey.[2]

Although their name implies possession of horses, there is no evidence to show that they were so called because they were believed to ride on horses.[3] Even their car, in which they are said to come from afar, or from heaven, earth, air and ocean,[4] is not exclusively drawn by horses. It is more commonly said to be drawn by birds,[5] such as swans and eagles[6] and sometimes by other animals such as buffaloes or an ass.[7] The car is said to touch the ends of heaven[8] and move round the sun in the distance.[9]

By far the most important characteristic of the Aśvins is, however, their power of healing and helping. Many mythological legends of this are found in the *Ṛigveda*, and the fact that in later literature they appear as the physicians of the gods, is but a natural development. Even in the *Ṛigveda* they are once called divine physicians (*daivyā bhiṣajā*),[10] who heal diseases with their remedies,[11] restore the sight of those who are blind[12] and cure the sick and the maimed.[13] Formerly, they renewed the youth of Kali after he had grown old,[14] and granting him his youth, they also prolonged the life of the sage Chyavana.[15] They restored Viṣṇāpū, like a lost animal to the sight of Viśvaka[16] and bore Bhujju, who was abandoned in a water-cloud in a ship.[17] When Viśpala lost his leg in battle, they gave him an iron one instead[18] and restored the sight of Ṛjrāśva, who had been made blind by his cruel father.[19] They also restored Parāvṛj, blind and lame, to sight and power,[20] saved Rebha,[21] Vandana[22] and the sage Atri Saptavadhri[23]

[1] IV. 45. 3. [2] I. 112. 21; V. 106. 10.
[3] Macdonell, VM., p. 50. [4] VIII. 5. 30, 8, 3, 4, 7: 10. 1.
[5] VI. 63. 6. [6] IV. 45. 4; I. 118. 4. [7] I. 184. 3; 116. 2.
[8] VII. 63. 2. [9] I. 112. 13. [10] VIII. 18. 8.
[11] VIII. 22. 10. [12] I. 116. 16. [13] X. 39. 3.
[14] X. 39. 8. [15] I. 116. 10; 117. 13; 118. 6, etc.
[16] I. 116. 23; 117. 7. [17] I. 116. 3, etc.
[18] I. 112. 10; 116. 15, etc. [19] I. 116. 16; 117. 17.
[20] I. 112. 8. [21] I. 112. 5; 116. 24, etc.
[22] I. 112. 5; 116. 11; 117. 5; 118. 6. [23] I. 112. 7; 116. 8, etc.

and bestowed wisdom on Kakṣīvat.[1] Besides these helps which they are invoked to grant, they also bestow wealth and many children,[2] destroy the enemies and preserve the homes and cattle of their worshippers.[3] They are said to be worshipped with hands uplifted.

The Aśvins 'have been variously "interpreted", yet in point of fact one knows no more now what was the original conception of the twain than was known before Occidental scholars began to study them'.[4] These remarks were written more than thirty years ago, but they are as true today as they were then. While Yāska's[5] own opinion is obscure, he informs us that some identified them with 'Heaven and Earth'; others, with 'Day and Night' and yet others with 'the Sun and Moon'; while the *aitihāsikas*[6] or the writers of history say they are 'two kings of holy or rather meritorious deeds, *rājānau puṇyakṛtau*'.[7] The last two of these four older opinions have found some support among western scholars. Ludwig and Miller,[8] followed by Hardy[9] and Hillebrandt[10] identified the Aśvins with the sun and moon,

[1] I. 116. 7; for the whole of this paragraph, see Muir, V, pp. 243–8; Macdonell, VM., pp. 51–3; Bergaigne, RV., II, pp. 451–93.

[2] VIII. 35. 10; I. 116. 25; VIII. 8. 13.

[3] VI. 63. 3. [4] Hopkins, RI., p. 80.

[5] Nir. XII. 1.

[6] Muir (V, p. 234) and Macdonell (VM., p. 53) translate the word as 'legendary writers'. Although history in the western sense of the word is almost unknown in ancient Indian literature, translating *itihāsa* as 'legends' gives in our opinion an inadequate and an incorrect idea. It appears to us that in the opinion of the Sanskṛit writers and poets the *aitihāsikas* were real historians and not merely writers or recorders of legends, admitting, however, that their notion of history was very narrow. Thus, it would probably be better to translate *itihāsa* as history, adding a note that the Indian conception of history is an admixture of legends and facts, the former often predominating over the latter.

[7] For a discussion of the various opinions see: Macdonell, VM., pp. 53-4; Muir, V, pp. 234, 255–7; Hopkins, RI., pp. 80–3; Griswold, RV., pp. 256–69; Bergaigne, RV., II, pp. 494–510; and especially, Hillebrandt, VM., pp. 379–96.

[8] Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 390f.

[9] *Vedische Brahmanische Periode*, pp. 47–9.

[10] VM., p. 535; III, pp. 390ff where he remarks: '*es ist kein Zweifel, dass Miller-Ludwigs Erklärung alle Schwierigkeiten uberwinden wurde.*'

while Geldner[1] thought that they were simply two 'succouring saints' of purely Indian origin and that they do not represent any natural phenomena. Roth interpreted Yāska's opinion as meaning Indra and Āditya (the sun), but Goldstücker thinks that the passage on which Roth relied does not bear out this conclusion. 'To judge from his words', writes Goldstücker,[2] 'it is the opinion of Yāska, that the Aśvins represent the transition from darkness to light, when the intermingling of both produces that inseparable duality expressed by the twin nature of these deities', and adds that 'he holds this to be the best interpretation that can be given of the character of the *cosmical* Aśvins'. This view is shared by Myriantheus,[3] and Hopkins[4] thought that 'they were probably, as inseparable twins, the twinlights or twilight, before dawn, half dark, half bright, so that one of them may be spoken of alone as the son of bright Dyaus (the sky)'. Some of the more improbable opinions are that they represent the morning and the evening wind,[5] fire of heaven and fire of the altar,[6] or the rain-giving gods (*Regengötter*).[7] But it appears to us that neither the 'sun and moon' nor the 'twilight' theories give any very satisfactory solution. Although the very word 'twilight' seems to suit the twin character of the Aśvins admirably, the two lights blend into one another so inseparably, that the conception of there being half-light and half-darkness cannot have dawned upon the human mind very early. And even if this were possible, it would be more appropriately used only of the evening twilight, because in the morning, the dawn was already recognized as a phenomenon, distinct both from the night and the day. With the evening twilight alone, the character of the Aśvins has, indeed, very little in common, and the same argu-

1 VS., II, p. 31.
2 As translated by Muir (V, pp. 255–57).
3 *Die Aśvins oder Arischen Dioskuren*, Munich, 1876.
4 RI., p. 82. 5 Brunnhofer, *Irân und Turân*, 1893, p. 99.
6 Bergaigne, RV., II, pp. 508-9 and the preceding pages.
7 Vodskov, see Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 389f.

ment holds with regard to the Lettic and the Greek gods, because the evening twilight cannot be very plausibly associated with horsemen or healing and succouring divinities. It would be impossible to maintain this theory with regard only to the morning twilight, because its striking similarity with the evening twilight, which, since it is the beginning of the hated darkness of the night, is far from benevolent, could not have passed unnoticed.

With regard to the sun and moon theory, the same argument which Hillebrandt[1] brings against the theory of the morning and the evening stars can be as forcibly applied here. The sun and moon are eternally separate, while the two brothers are united and, on the whole, when the one is seen the other is absent. To unite the sun and the moon would mean lowering the greatness and importance of the sun to the comparatively inferior position (except in mythology) occupied by the moon among the Indo-European peoples. For although Hillebrandt has repeatedly sought to prove that the moon was as important an object of worship as the sun, it remains a significant fact that the moon never attained to the position of a great god in early times.

Oldenberg[2] following Mannhardt[3] and Bollensen,[4] identified the Aśvins with the morning star, since this was the only morning light besides fire, dawn and sun, and since this identification agreed with what little information we have of the Lettic 'sons of god' and the Greek Dioskouroi. Against this view it is argued,[5] that although 'the time, the luminous nature and the course of the Aśvins round the heavens suit', the Aśvins are a dual divinity, while the morning star is single. If an attempt is made to overcome this difficulty by taking the evening star to form a pair

[1] '*Dort zwei stets getrennte Wesen, hier ein fast stets verbundenes Brüderpaar; dort stets einer und allein; hier stets zwei*, etc.'—VM., III, p. 385f.

[2] RV., pp. 207–15.

[3] *Zft. f. Ethnologie*, VII, p. 312f.

[4] ZDMG., XLI, p. 496.

[5] Macdonell, VM., p. 53.

with the morning star, it is retorted that they are eternally separate, that only one is seen at a time and that during certain periods, one of them is absent for months.[1]

Finally, Weber[2] suggested that the Aśvins as well as the Greek Dioskouroi represented the twin constellation of the Gemini. Criticizing Weber, Hillebrandt observes that it would be remarkable if out of the whole Indo-European mythology only these two stars and no others were to play such an incomparably great part in the mythology of the later periods: if Miller was right in remarking that the Aśvins and the Dioskouroi originally represented stars, we shall have to recognize the existence of a developed star-cult among the Indians.[3] This second objection of Miller and Hillebrandt is, however, of no value, because it is possible to have only two stars raised to the position of gods, through their connexion, real or imaginary, with the lives of men, while all the other stars may be entirely neglected It is not arguable that merely because the *soma*-plant receives such high worship there was general tree-worship or because the horse and the press-stones are celebrated in the *Ṛigveda*, a general animal and stone-worship must have existed at that time.

The only conclusion that one can arrive at, after discussing all these theories, is that it seems impossible to determine the origin of the Aśvins with any certainty.

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Bergaigne, RV., II, pp. 431–510.
Griswold, RV., pp. 254–64.
Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 379–96.
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Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 41–3.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 49–54.
Muir, V, pp. 234–54.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 209–15.

1 Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 385f.
2 I. St., V, pp. 234, 266; I. Str., III, pp. 39, 468; *Rājasūya*, 100.
3 Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 388f.

## CHAPTER X

# ATMOSPHERIC GODS

### *Indra*

INDRA is the favourite and national god of the Vedic Indians and statistically he is most prominent in the *Ṛigveda* since more than one-fourth of it is dedicated to him. His name, which appears to belong to the Indo-Iranian period, as it was found on the Boghaz-köi inscriptions, is of uncertain meaning, and Indra has consequently become a highly developed anthropomorphic and mythological figure. Yet the more important and the major part of his activities is connected with the struggle of the natural forces. In the words of Macdonell,[1] Indra 'is primarily the thunder-god, the conquest of the demons of drought or darkness, and the consequent liberation of the waters, or the winning of light, forming his mythological essence. Secondarily Indra is the god of battle, who aids the victorious Aryan in the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants of India.'

He is the greatest god of the middle region and pervades the air.[2] His appearance is sometimes described as tawny[3] and sometimes as golden,[4] and he can assume the most beautiful forms at will and the ruddy brightness of the sun.[5] He is called *suśipra* or *śiprin*, 'fair-lipped' or 'one possessed of fair cheeks'.[6] The thunderbolt (*vajra*) is the regular mythological name of the stroke of lightning, and was fashioned for him by the architect Tvaṣṭṛ;[7] and although he is sometimes described as armed with stones and clubs, as well as a bow and arrows,[8] it is a weapon which exclusively belongs to him.

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 54. [2] I. 57. 2. [3] X. 96.
[4] I. 7, 2; VIII. 55. 3. [5] X. 112. 3; III. 48. 4; 53. 8.
[6] I. 29, 2; III. 36, 10; VIII. 33, 7; etc.
[7] I. 32, 2, etc. [8] VIII. 45, 4; 66, 6, 11; X. 103, 2, 3.

With Vāyu as his charioteer,[1] he drives through the air in a golden car,[2] drawn by two tawny steeds (*harī*).[3] It runs swifter than thought,[4] and the epithet *rathe-ṣṭhā*,[5] 'car-fighter', is exclusively applied to him. His horses are variously described and often said to be yoked by the power of prayer.[6]

Though the gods in general are fond of *soma*,[7] Indra is pre-eminently addicted to it.[8] He even stole it in order to drink it.[9] It being his favourite beverage, the epithet *Somapā(-pāvan)* '*soma*-drinker' is characteristic of him.[10] *Soma* stimulates Indra to perform great cosmic actions[11] and exhilarates him to carry out his warlike deeds.[12] He also drinks milk mixed with honey and at the same time eats the flesh of bulls,[13] but *soma*, given him by his mother on the day of his birth,[14] is an absolute necessary of life. The hymn X. 119 is a soliloquy of Indra, in which he sings his own praise while he was drunk with *soma*. The hymns and praises addressed to Indra also increase his strength and stimulate his energies.[15] Although he is a god of unlimited heroic prowess, the ancient,[16] the undecaying, yet he is often spoken of as having been born, and two entire hymns are devoted to this subject.[17] His mother is once spoken of as a cow (*gṛṣṭi*),[18] and once he is said to be the son of *Niṣṭigrī*, whom Sāyaṇa regards as synonymous with Aditi.[19] From a few hymns,[20] it is inferred that he was regarded as the son of Dyaus. In the *Puruṣa-Sūkta*[21]

1 IV. 46, 2; 48, 2. 2 VI. 29, 2. 3 I. 81, 3; III. 45, 1, etc.
4 X. 112, 2. 5 VI. 29, 2.
6 I. 82, 6; *brahmayujā harī*, VIII. 17, 2, etc.
7 VIII. 2, 18; 58. 11. 8 I. 104, 9. 9 III. 48, 4; VIII. 4, 4.
10 VIII. 2, 4; *somakāmam tvā āhuḥ*, I. 104, 9.
11 II. 15, 2. 12 II. 15, 1; I. 19, 2; VI. 47, 1, 2.
13 X. 28, 3; 27, 2; VI. 17, 11; VIII. 66, 10.
14 VI. 40, 2; III. 32, 9.
15 *Indra brahmāṇi taviṣīm avardhan*, V. 31, 10; II. 12, 14; III. 34, 1, etc.
16 II. 22, 4. 17 III. 48; IV. 18.
18 IV. 111, 2. 19 X. 101, 12.
20 IV. 18. 1, etc.; cf. Muir, V, p. 78 and Macdonell, VM., p. 56.
21 X. 90, 13.

he is said to have sprung, along with Agni, from the mouth of Puruṣa, and in another place[1] he is said to have been generated by *soma*, along with other gods.

Indra has Agni as his twin brother[2] and Pūṣan as his brother.[3] His spouse Indrāṇī is referred to several times[4] and in one of the hymns[5] they are represented as conversing with each other.

Indra is associated with various other gods, but the Maruts are his most constant companions, who in innumerable passages are referred to as assisting him in his warlike exploits. His connexion with this group of deities is so intimate that the epithet *marutvat* 'accompanied by the Maruts', *marutgaṇa* 'attended by the Marut host', are characteristic of him.[6] He is coupled as a dual divinity with Agni, Varuṇa, and Vāyu and less frequently with Soma, Bṛhaspati, Pūṣan and Viṣṇu, while in three or four passages he is more or less clearly identified with the sun, Sūrya[7] and Savitṛ.[8]

His gigantic size is dwelt upon in many passages and 'his greatness and power are lauded in the most unstinted terms'.[9] The hymn II. 12 well describes his heroic deeds, one or other of which is almost invariably referred to when Indra is spoken of. We will summarize the contents of this hymn:

'He, a keen-thoughted god, as soon as born surpassed all the other gods in might; before his vehemence the two worlds trembled. He established firmly the quivering earth, set at rest the agitated mountains, measured out the atmospheric region, supported the sky, slew the dragon and freed the seven rivers. It was he who generated fire between two rocks and humbled and destroyed the *dāsa* colour. He hath begotten the sun and the dawn and, guide of waters, he

[1] IX. 96, 5. [2] VI. 59, 2. [3] VI. 55, 5.
[4] I. 82, 5, 6; III. 53, 4, 5; X. 86, 9, 10. [5] X. 86. 11, 12.
[6] Macdonell, VM., p. 57; V. 42, 6; IX. 65, 10.
[7] IV. 26, 1; X. 89. 2; VIII. 82, 4. cf. Macdonell, loc. cit.
[8] II. 30, 1. [9] Macdonell, VM., p. 58.

controls the steeds, the cattle, village-clans and chariots. Without him men can never be victorious. With his arrows he slays the sinful, and pardons not the proud man's arrogance. He smote Śambara, the son of Danu and, bolt in arm, he spurned the demon Rauhiṇa. Even the heaven and the earth bow down before his prowess and the mountains tremble at it. But he is the helper of the rich as well as the poor. He aids with his unfailing aids him who presses *soma*, cooks food (for the offering), sings praises and offers sacrifice.'

The slaying of the demon Vṛtra,[1] 'the obstructer who encompassed the waters', is the greatest heroic deed Indra has performed and so *Vṛtrahan* becomes his most characteristic epithet. This great conflict in which Indra, with the help of the Maruts, slew Vṛtra is very vividly described in one of the hymns[2] and this mighty deed is constantly referred to whenever Indra is spoken of.

'I will proclaim the brave deeds of Indra, the thunder-wielder, which he performed first of all. He slew the dragon, let loose the waters, and smote the caverns of the mountains. Impetuous like a bull, he chose *soma* and drank it in threefold vessels. Then he seized the thunderbolt which was fashioned for him by Tvaṣṭṛ and with it slew the first-born of the serpents. Then, while the serpent lay stretched out along earth's surface like a broken reed, like trunks of trees laid low by axes, the waters like a lowing cow rapidly flowed to the ocean. Like a mad weakling (had) Vṛtra challenged Indra, the great hero, the impetuous warrior.'

'Indra is king of all that's fixed and moving; of tame and horned beasts, the thunder-victor. He truly rules as king of busy mortals; them he encompasses as spokes the felly.'[3] But this deed is not of the kind which is once done and finished. Indra is often described as slaying Vṛtra with his

[1] Vṛtra is sometimes called *ahi* 'the serpent' or 'the dragon'. [2] I. 32.

[3] The translation of this last verse of I. 13 is taken from Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 48.

bolt in the present or being invoked to let loose water in future,[1] and heaven and earth tremble with fear when Indra strikes Vṛtra with his bolt.[2] This appears to be a mythical representation of a combat of constant occurrence in nature. What it actually is, and what Indra truly represents, is a matter of wide difference of opinion, although only two of these opinions can be said to be probable. He has been identified with 'the thunder and storm', 'the lightning', 'the sky', 'the year', as well as with the 'sun' and 'fire' in general.[3]

It is, however, certain that Indra does not represent either the sky or the year. Nor can he be regarded as representing fire in the sense in which Agni represents it, and the opinion of those who admit this correction can be considered as merging in the opinion that he represents the lightning. For, even when he is said to represent fire, it is fire in the lightning and not terrestrial fire, while fire in the lightning is only one of the two aspects of the god Agni.

We have already remarked that there are some passages in which Indra is actually identified with the sun as Sūrya or Savitṛ. But these passages cannot be regarded as giving any definite information, since such identifications are not uncommon in the *Ṛigveda*. So the theory that Indra represents the sun has also to be abandoned. It is clear, therefore, that originally Indra was either the god of the lightning or the thunderstorm, and the latter appears to us to be more probable.[4] Only if Indra represented the thunderstorm does the comparison between the stroke of

[1] IV. 19. 8; VIII. 78. 4.

[2] I. 80, 11; II. 11, 9, 10; VI. 17, 9.

[3] Hopkins, RI., p. 90; Perry, JAOS., XI, p. 119; Muir, V, p. 77. See also Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 157ff. and Bloomfield, RV., pp. 179ff.

[4] Bloomfield, RV., p. 181. After examining particularly the theory of Professor Hillebrandt that Indra represents the summer sun, Bloomfield says: 'It is therefore still possible that the myth of Indra, Vṛtra and the waters represents a specialized poetic treatment of a myth of thunderstorm, cloud and rain.'

lightning and the throw of Indra's bolt become sensible. It also affords a much more natural explanation of many passages in the Indra-hymns; as for example, when Indra is said to have created the lightnings of heaven[1] or to have directed the action of the waters downwards[2] by destroying the enclosure of Vala.

Besides Vṛtra, Indra fights with many other demons, e.g. Uraṇa[3] of ninety-nine arms, and Viśvarūpa[4] of three heads and six eyes, and crushes Arbuda with his foot.[5] He also sweeps away the Asuras,[6] consumes the Raksasas[7] and overcomes the malignant spirits (*druhaḥ*).[8]

Indra, the great warrior god of the Vedic Indians as he undoubtedly is, is called upon as the helper of the Aryans in their conflicts with earthly enemies more frequently than any other deity. He is invoked to protect the Aryan colour,[9] to subjugate the Dasyus and give their land to the Aryans.[10] Indra, 'the bountiful' (*maghavan*), an epithet peculiarly his, is the benefactor and the compassionate helper,[11] the deliverer and advocate of his worshippers, whose friend is never slain or conquered.[12] He is sometimes spoken of as alone the king of the whole world;[13] lord of all that moves and breathes;[14] the leader of the human race and the divine;[15] the universal monarch;[16] the self-dependent sovereign.[17]

Although there are many attributes which are common both to Varuṇa and Indra, their characters reveal striking points of contrast. Moral sovereignty of the universe is the chief characteristic and the main function of Varuṇa. He is the lord of ethical law who, sitting on his heavenly throne,

[1] II. 13, 7. [2] II. 17, 5. [3] II. 14, 4. [4] X. 99, 6.
[5] I. 51, 6, VIII. 32. 26. [6] VIII. 85, 9. [7] VI. 18, 10.
[8] IV. 23, 7; 28, 2. [9] III. 34, 9. [10] IV. 26, 2.
[11] I. 84, 19; VIII. 55, 13; 69, 11.
[12] X. 152, 1; Macdonell, VM., p. 62.
[13] *Eko viśvasya bhuvanasya rājā*, III. 46, 2. Also, *divaḥ pṛthivyāśca samrāt*, I. 100, 1.
[14] I. 101, 5. [15] III. 34, 2. [16] IV. 19, 2.
[17] III. 46, 1; Macdonell, VM., p. 58.

governs the universe according to fixed rules, while Indra is a warrior of irresistible might, who performs many heroic deeds and helps the Aryan conquerors in their struggle with the aborigines.[1] In Indra there are also certain sensual and immoral traits, a quality from which not only Varuṇa but almost all the Vedic gods are singularly free. For example, he is said to have slain his father,[2] shattered the car of Dawn[3] and quarrelled with the Maruts.[4] They are, however, chiefly connected with his excessive fondness for *soma*. Macdonell[5] remarks that this perhaps is due to his more advanced anthropomorphism, while Griswold[6] attributes it to his being a practical god of action and not a 'negative character' like Varuṇa.

The view of Roth,[7] which was later followed by Whitney,[8] that the pre-eminence of Varuṇa as belonging to the older order of gods, was in the Ṛigvedic period transferred to Indra, has hardly any supporters today. It was in the main based on the fact that Varuṇa is much less frequently mentioned in the last book than in the earlier books of the *Ṛigveda*. But this by itself does not furnish a convincing proof of the position.[9] Benfey and Breal, on the other hand, considered Indra to have superseded the ancient god Dyaus, but this, Macdonell thinks, may perhaps with greater probability be maintained with regard to the Indo-Iranian Trita-Āptya. In our opinion, however, the changing situation of the Aryans affords the most natural explanation of the change in the pre-eminence of the gods. So long as they were not threatened by a powerful and a dangerous enemy, so long as they could migrate and expand the territory of their occupation without any great obstruction, the peace-loving, law-abiding Varuṇa was good enough for

1 cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 65; Griswold, RV., p. 201.
2 Macdonell, VR., p. 604. 3 II. 15, 6.
4 I. 170, 2; cf. also Griswold, RV., p. 201 and note 2.
5 VM., p. 65. 6 RV., p. 201.
7 ZDMG., VI, p. 73. 8 JAOS., III, p. 327.
9 cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 65f; Muir, V, pp. 121–6; Oldenberg, RV., pp. 95–7.

them, although fighting was by no means rare. But when they encountered the Dasyus in India, not only was their further advance beyond the Indus checked, but they were in danger of being defeated and driven out of the small portion of India that they had already occupied. Under these circumstances they had to summon all their strength as well as guile to conquer their enemies, and thus it is natural that they should invoke the patron warrior-god Indra oftener than the passive ruler. In this way, to the period of peaceful migration up to the Indus belongs the popularity of the peaceful and quiet-loving Varuṇa, but when the Aryans had to struggle hard to maintain their position and possessions, Indra became the national hero.

LITERATURE

Barth, RI., p. 12f.
Bloomfield, RV., pp. 173–82.
Griswold, RV., pp. 176–208.
Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 155–228 and 267–93.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 91–6.
Kaegi, RV., pp. 40–7.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 47–50.
Macdonell, VM., pp, 54–66.
Macdonell, VR., p. 604.
Muir, V, pp. 77–139.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 134–75.
Roth, ZDMG., I, p. 72.

### *The Maruts*

This group of gods, which is always mentioned in the plural, is quite prominent in the *Ṛigveda*, being invoked in more than thirty-three hymns. Their most important function is to help Indra in his warlike deeds, and they hardly attain the position of independent gods of any imposing individuality. Consequently their signification from a religious point of view is not very great.[1]

[1] cf. Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 322–6.

They are the sons of Rudra and therefore called the Rudras,[1] or sometimes the Rudriyas.[2] They are again said to be born of the variegated cow Pṛśni,[3] the mother cloud, or sometimes even self-born.[4] Their number varies from thrice seven[5] to thrice sixty.[6] They are all brothers of equal age[7] and of one mind.[8] They are young warriors armed with spears and battle-axes, wearing helmets and decked with golden ornaments.[9] Their brilliance is constantly referred to. They are self-luminous;[10] they are golden;[11] they have the brightness of the sun or the blazing fire.[12] They drive in golden cars,[13] drawn by spotted steeds of ruddy hue,[14] who have teeth of gold[15] and are swift as thought.[16]

'Strong, born together, they together have waxed great; the heroes more and more have grown to majesty.

'Resplendent as the sun's beams in their light, O Maruts, from the ocean ye send forth the rain, and fraught with vaporous moisture pour the torrents down.

'Never, ye wonder workers, are your milch-kine dry.
Neither the mountains nor the rivers keep
you back: whither ye have resolved thither ye, Maruts, go.
Ye compass round about the heaven and the earth.
O Maruts, lead us on to higher fortune:
Deliver us, when lauded, from afflictions.
Accept, ye holy ones, the gifts we bring you.
May we be masters of abundant riches.'[17]

The physical basis of these gods being quite clear, it is never entirely lost sight of. As wind gods they are repeatedly

[1] II. 39, 4, etc. [2] I. 38, 7; II. 34, 10.
[3] Hopkins, RI., p. 97; VII. 56, 4. Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 306ff.
[4] I. 168, 2; V. 87, 2. [5] I. 133, 6; Hopkins, RI., p. 98.
[6] VIII. 85, 8. [7] I. 165, 1. [8] VIII. 20, 1, 4.
[9] Macdonell, VR., p. 605a; Hopkins, RI., p. 98; V. 54. 11; V. 57, 2.
[10] IX. 37, 2; V. 53, 4. [11] *Hiraṇyayāsaḥ*, VI. 66, 2.
[12] VI. 66, 2; X. 75, 3. [13] V. 57, 1. [14] I. 88, 2; V. 57, 4.
[15] VIII. 7, 27. [16] I. 85, 4. [17] V. 55, as translated by Griffiths.

associated with lightning[1] (*vidyut*), which they hold in hand;[2] with rain, which it is one of their chief functions to shed;[3] and last but not least with the god Indra, to whom as representing the phenomena of the thunderstorm they stand in the closest of relations. Like other gods they are also invoked to grant long life extending over a hundred winters,[4] and abundant wealth and many children.

They have inherited at least some of the characteristics of their father Rudra. Thus like him they are fierce,[5] irascible,[6] terrible like wild beasts[7] and of fearful aspect.[8] They cause the mountains, the earth and the two worlds to quake;[9] they rend trees, and, like elephants, are devourers of the forests;[10] they roar like lions and all creatures are afraid of them.[11] They are also like Rudra implored to ward off the lightning from their worshippers, not to let their ill-will reach them and to avert their cow- and man-slaying bolt.[12] They bring healing remedies[13] in the shape of waters, since they are said to bestow medicine by raining.[14] Their noise is particularly referred to. At one place it is expressly called thunder,[15] while in several places they are called the singers of heaven.[16] Like their leader Indra they also drink *soma*.[17]

A. Kuhn, Benfey, Meyer, and Schröder hold the Maruts to be personifications of the souls of the dead. Macdonell thinks this origin historically possible, but says that the *Ṛigveda* furnishes no evidence in support of it. The view is indeed based on nothing else but the derivation of the word *marut* from the root *mṛ* to die, which is extremely doubtful.[18]

[1] V. 54. 2, 3, 11; I. 64. 5. [2] VIII. 7, 25; V. 54. 11.
[3] I. 64. 6; V. 53, 6, 10; 59, 8; VIII. 7. 16. [4] V. 54. 75.
[5] I. 19, 4. [6] VII. 56. 8. [7] II. 34, 1; also V. 56. 2, 3; etc.
[8] V. 56. 2; I. 19, 5; 64. 2; [9] I. 39, 5; 87, 3; VII. 57, 1.
[10] I. 39, 5; 64. 7. [11] I. 64, 8; 85–8. cf. Muir, V, pp. 150-1.
[12] VII. 56, 17. [13] VIII. 20, 23–6. [14] V. 53, 14.
[15] I. 23. 11. [16] V. 57. 5; 521, 1; etc. [17] II. 36. 2.
[18] Macdonell, VM., p. 81; for etymology see Bradke, DA., p. 172f; Kaegi, RV., p. 136 n.; Hopkins, RI., p. 92; Macdonell, VRS., p. 22; Griswold, RV., p. 205, n. 3.

*Mṛ* (*mar*) indeed is the only possible root with which the word can be connected, but whether it is used in the sense of 'to die', 'to crush', or 'to shine', it is hard to decide. The last meaning, however, seems to accord best with the description of these gods in the *Ṛigveda*. Hillebrandt[1] thinks that the name '*rudras*' combines two meanings, viz., (i) 'storm-winds' and (ii) 'the spirits which cause harm and illness'.

'According to the native interpreters, the Maruts represent the winds',[2] and in this instance, it appears that they are nearer the truth than are the modern scholars. It is true that the Maruts are constantly associated with lightning, thunder, rain, etc., but taking into consideration the fact that in a storm a fearful wind is the chief thing, it is not clear why the Maruts should be called the storm-gods instead of pure wind-gods. Etymology, it is true, does not show a clear connexion with the wind, but neither does it any better with storm. On the other hand, if we accept the native interpretation, Maruts become much more natural companions of Indra, as representing the phenomena of a thunderstorm as a whole. The wind should, however, be understood as the wind which accompanies a raging thunderstorm and not the ordinary wind. For the latter aspect of wind we have special gods in the *Ṛigveda* itself, viz., Vāyu and Vāta.[3]

LITERATURE

Barth, RI., p. 14.
Griswold, RV., pp. 202–7.
Hillebrandt, VM., III. pp. 301–26.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 96–9.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 77–81.
Muir, V. pp. 147–54.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 224-5.

1 Hillebrandt, VM., III, p. 301.
2 Macdonell, VM., p. 81.
3 cf. Griswold, RV., pp. 205-6.

### *Vāyu and Vāta*

Besides the Maruts, there are two other wind-gods, Vāyu and Vāta. Vāta is simply the name of the physical phenomenon of wind, while Vāyu is a god proper, being a divine personification of wind. Vāyu is very often associated, and several times jointly invoked, with Indra, as Indravāyu, while Vāta, being less fully personified, is only associated with Parjanya.[1]

Although 'Vāyu is rarely connected with the Maruts',[2] he is once said to have generated them from the wombs of heaven[3] and to be accompanied by them.[4] He drives in a shining car drawn by a pair of,[5] (or ninety-nine,[6] or a hundred or even by a thousand)[7] red or purple horses. He often occupies the same golden chariot with Indra, which touches the sky.[8] He is the protector of *soma*[9] and is repeatedly asked 'to come to the drinking of the juice'.[10] He is also associated with the 'nectar-yielding' *sabaḥdughā* cow.[11] He grants fame and wealth,[12] disperses foes[13] and protects the weak.[14]

The description of Vāta is much more concrete and his name is frequently connected with the root *vā* 'to blow' from which it is derived.[15]

> 'Of Vāta's car I now will praise the greatness:
> Rending, it speeds along; its noise is thunder
> Touching the sky it flies, creating lightnings;
> Scattering dust it traverses earth's ridges.[16]
>
> Never on any day he tarries resting,
> The first born, order-loving friend of waters.[17]
>
> Of gods the breath, and of the world the offspring,
> This God according to his liking wanders.

1 Macdonell, VM., p. 82; Muir, V, p. 145.
2 ibid. 3 I. 134. 4. 4 I. 142. 12.
5 I. 134. 3. 6 IV. 48, 4. 5. 7 II. 41, 1.
8 VII. 91, 5; IV. 46, 3, 4.
9 X. 85, 5. 10 IV. 48; and also 46, 47. 11 I. 134. 4.
12 VII. 90. 2, 6. 13 IV. 48. 2. 14 I. 134. 5.
15 Macdonell, VM., p. 82. 16 X. 168. 1. 17 3 b-c.

His sound is heard, his form is never looked on.
That Vāta let us worship with oblation.'[1]

He is said to possess healing power and is prayed to be a friend and to prolong lives.[2] The name of Vāta has been identified with that of the Germanic god of storm and battle, Odhin or Wodan; but this identification appears very doubtful.[3]

LITERATURE

Griswold, RV., pp. 286–90.
Hardy, VBP., p. 82f.
Hillebrandt, VM., III, pp. 326–31.
Kaegi, RV., p. 38.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, RV., pp. 61-62.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 81–83.
Muir, V, pp. 143–6.
Oldenberg, RV., p. 225f.

### *Rudra*

In the *Ṛigveda* Rudra occupies a subordinate position, having only three entire hymns. His physical features are very often mentioned[4] and his braided hair (like that of Pūṣan)[5] became one of his chief characteristics in later times. He is strong, mighty, tawny and of a fair complexion; whose gracious hands bestow health and happiness; of firm limbs and great strength, he is the sovereign of the world and there is none who is mightier than he; he is fierce like a bull, and borne on a chariot he slays like a wild beast of the forest.[6] Bow and arrows are his usual weapons, but sometimes he is said to possess a thunderbolt and lightning shaft. His relationship with the Maruts is often expressed, and he is frequently called the Maruts' father. He generated them from the shining udder of Pṛśni[7] but he does not fight with the demons as his sons do in company with Indra.

[1] Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 62. [2] X. 186. 1, 2.
[3] Macdonell, VM., p. 83; see references there given. [4] II. 33; I. 114.
[5] I. 114. 1, 5. [6] II. 33. 7–11, 15. [7] II. 34. 2.

One of the most prominent peculiarities of this god is that two qualities of altogether opposite character are attributed to him. On the one hand, he is fierce and destructive like a bull,[1] like the ruddy boar of heaven;[2] while on the other hand, he is wise,[3] beneficent[4] and bountiful (*midhvas*).[5] But on the whole his malignant nature predominates, for the hymns often express fear of his terrible shafts and deprecation of his wrath.

> 'May Rudra's missile turn aside and pass us,
> May the fierce Rudra's great ill-will go by us.
> Relax thy rigid bow to save our patrons;
> Spare, O thou god of bounty, child and grandchild.
> So brown-hued, mighty Rudra, widely famous,
> Here to our invocations be attentive,
> As not, O god, to rise in wrath and slay us.'[6]

He is once even called 'the man-slaying' (*nṛghna*).[7] 'Rudra is indeed the one malignant deity of the *Ṛigveda*',[8] a characteristic which appears much more prominently in later literature.[9] In the *Ṛigveda*, his healing powers are also mentioned with great frequency and he is called the healing physician of physicians.[10]

Neither his physical basis, nor the etymology of his name is quite clear. As usual there are various opinions[11] which try to account for and explain his origin, but 'he is generally regarded as a storm-god' and more especially 'the baleful side of storm in the destructive agency of lightning'.[12] Griswold[13] thinks that 'there is no ground for limiting Rudra's original sphere and function to the destructive agency of lightning'; and says, 'if Rudra was at first the one who hurls the destructive lightning-dart, later, as the Aryans advanced further into the Punjab, he may have been thought

[1] II. 33. 7–9, 11, 15. [2] I. 114. 5. [3] I. 114. 4.
[4] II. 33. 7; VI. 49. 10. [5] I. 114. 3. [6] II. 33. 14, 15.
[7] IV. 3. 6. [8] Macdonell, VR., p. 604b.
[9] e.g. VS., III, 61, etc.; AV., I. 28. 5, etc. [10] II. 33. 4.
[11] Macdonell, VM., p. 77; Griswold, RV., pp. 296–8.
[12] Macdonell, VM., p. 77; Macdonell, JRAS., XXVII, p. 957.
[13] RV., p. 296.

of as hurling the dart of sunstroke—that very real peril in India'. This conjecture, however, appears to be quite improbable. Firstly, because the *Ṛigveda* hardly refers to this feature of the sun, even if Rudra may be regarded to have some connexion with it; and secondly, lightning and sunstroke, although both are dreadful things, are exactly the opposite of each other, the presence of one being a sure sign of the absence of the other.

Sāyaṇa derives the word from *rud* 'to cry' and hence takes it to mean 'a howler'; Grassmann[1] from *rud*, 'to shine', and Pischel[2] from *rud* 'to be ruddy', thus taking it to mean 'the bright' or 'the ruddy one'. The word *tryambaka*, which in post-Vedic literature is a common epithet, is found once even in the *Ṛigveda*, probably in the sense of '"he who has three mothers"[3] in allusion to the threefold division of the universe'.[4]

LITERATURE

Griswold, RV., pp. 293–8.
Hillebrandt, VM., II, pp. 179–205.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 54–6.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 74–7.
Muir, IV, pp. 299–363, 420–3.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 216–24, etc.

## *Parjanya*

Parjanya the rain-god is a subordinate deity of the *Ṛigveda*, being invoked in three hymns only. The name often means 'rain-cloud' but the derivation is uncertain. Owing to his similarity of character with the Lithuanian thunder-god Perkunas, the two are often identified, but phonetically this identification is not free from doubt. In the *Ṛigveda* the word is an appellative of the thundering

[1] *Wörterbuch zum Ṛigveda.*
[2] cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 77.
[3] =*trimātā*, III. 56. 5.
[4] Macdonell, VM., p. 74.

rain-cloud as well as the proper name of its personification, in the sense of a god who actually sheds rain.

The following passages show his main characteristics:[1]

'Invoke the mighty god with songs of welcome,
Parjanya praise: with homage seek to win him.
He, roaring like a bull, with streams that quicken
A seed to germinate in plants deposits. 1.

The trees he shatters and he smites the demon host;
The whole world trembles at his mighty weapon's stroke;
The guiltless man himself flees from the potent god,
When miscreants Parjanya with his thunder strikes. 2.

The winds blow forth; to earth the quivering lightnings fall,
The plants shoot up; with moisture streams the realm of light.
For all the world abundant nourishment is born,
When by Parjanya Earth is fertilized with seed. 4.

When, O Parjanya, roaring loud,
Thou slay'st with thunder wicked men,
This universe rejoices then,
And everything that is on earth. 9.

Thou hast shed rain; pray now withhold it wholly;
Thou hast made passable all desert places:
To serve as food thou hast made plants to flourish:
And hast received the gratitude of creatures.'[2] 10.

He is also called the lord of all creatures,[3] the Asura,[4] the independent monarch,[5] and frequently the divine father.[6] In one passage he is called the son of Dyaus or the sky,[7] and by implication he is the husband of the earth. He produces

[1] Quoted from Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 52f.
[2] V. 83.
[3] VII. 101. 2.
[4] V. 83. 6.
[5] VII. 101. 5.
[6] V. 83. 6; IX. 82. 3; VII. 101. 3.
[7] VII. 102. 1.

fertility not only among plants and trees[1] but among animals also,[2] and is thus invoked for that purpose.[3]

LITERATURE

Barth, RI., p. 14.
Griswold, RV., pp. 141-2.
Hardy, VBP., pp. 80–2.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 103-4.
Kaegi, RV., p. 40.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 53-4.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 83–5.
Muir, V, pp. 140–2.
Oldenberg, RV., p. 226.

### *Other Atmospheric Gods*

Besides the above, there are some gods of minor importance, who belong to the middle region. These are Āpaḥ, Apāṁ Napāt, Trita Āptya, Mātariśvan, Ahibudhnya and Aja Ekapād; but only the first two are invoked in whole hymns.

*Āpaḥ:*

The Waters, Āpaḥ, are collectively celebrated in four hymns and parts of others and are invoked along with other deities. The meaning of the word being quite clear, the personification is not much developed. The name indicates sometimes the celestial waters,[4] but at others rain-water and water flowing in channels is clearly meant. Thus, they are said to dwell where the gods are,[5] to have the sun by their side,[6] and to have the sea for their goal.[7] They are the goddesses who follow the path of the gods[8] and who purify men even from moral guilt.[9]

The following hymn is well worth quoting:[10]

'Ye Waters are the source of bliss: so help ye
us to energy
That we may look on great delight: 1.

[1] V. 83. 4. [2] VII. 102. 2. [3] V. 83. 7.
[4] X. 30. 1. [5] X. 30. 1. [6] I. 23. 17; cf. Hopkins, RI., p. 99.
[7] VII. 49. 2. [8] VII. 47. 3. [9] X. 17. 10; I. 23. 22.
[10] X. 9, Griffiths' translation.

Give us a portion of the juice, the most auspicious that ye have
Like mothers in their longing love. 2.

To you we gladly come for him to whose abode ye send us on;
And, Waters, give us procreant strength. 3.

The Waters be to us for drink, goddesses for aid and bliss:
Let them stream to us health and wealth. 4.

I beg the Floods to give us balm,
These queens who rule o'er precious things,
And have supreme control of men. 5.

Within the Waters—Soma thus hath told me—dwell all balms that heal,
And Agni, he who blesseth all. 6.

O Waters, teem with medicine
to keep my body safe from harm,
So that I long may see the sun. 7.

Whatever sin is found in me,
Whatever evil I have wrought,
If I have lied or falsely sworn,
Waters, remove it far from me. 8.

The Waters I this day have sought,
And to their moisture have we come:
O Agni, rich in milk, come thou,
And with thy splendour cover me.' 9.

The waters are several times associated with honey and sometimes they appear to be identified with Soma, both in his heavenly and his terrestrial forms.[1] They are the *soma*-bringers; they bear the well-pressed *soma*-juice to Indra.[2] Soma is delighted, he is enraptured with them, as a young

[1] Macdonell, VM., pp. 85-6; VII. 47. 1, 2; X. 30. 7-9, 13.
[2] X. 30. 13, 14.

man with beautiful maidens, and the youthful damsels bow before the youth who comes to them.[1]

*Apām Napāt:*

This deity has only one whole hymn to himself. As his name occurs in the *Avesta* he appears to have belonged to the Indo-Iranian period. Whatever he may have originally been based upon, and whether he was a sun-god[2] or a moon-god[3] or a water-god[4] in the Indo-Iranian period, it appears to us to be quite beyond doubt that in the *Ṛigveda* at any rate, he stands for nothing else but the celestial form of Agni, born in the water-clouds in the form of lightning,[5] and this for the following reasons:

(1) his name means the 'son of waters', and not simply 'waters', and a 'son of waters' need not necessarily represent waters;

(2) Agni is directly called Apām Napāt;[6]

(3) like Apām Napāt 'the son of waters', Agni is also called the embryo (*garbha*) of the waters;[7]

(4) the third form of Agni is often described as kindled in waters, the ocean, the udder of heaven, the lap of the waters.[8] For the above three reasons, the remark of Macdonell that 'in fact the abode of the celestial Agni in the waters is one of the best established points in Vedic mythology'[9] is fully justified;

(5) finally, the one hymn in which Apām Napāt is invoked states it in unambiguous words.[10]

He rises in the clouds and is clothed in lightning;[11] indestructible, he dwells in distant forts where lies and evil

[1] X. 30. 5-6. [2] Müller, *Chips*, IV, p. 410; NR., p. 500.
[3] Hillebrandt, VM., I, pp. 365–80; Hardy, VBP., V, pp. 130, 38f.
[4] Oldenberg, RV., pp. 118–20.
[5] Spiegel, Darmesteter (L.), Schröder and Macdonell have held the same view; cf. VM., p. 70 and references.
[6] VII. 9. 3. [7] I. 70. 3. [8] X. 45. 1–3.
[9] Macdonell, VM., p. 70. [10] II. 35. 9. etc. [11] II. 35. 9.

spirits reach him not;[1] youthful maidens kindle him whose food is oil, and golden-coloured he shines forth in splendid beauty with his bright rays.[2] 'Let us worship him, the friend of many, with sacrifices, reverence and oblations; providing him with fuel and food I make his back shine and I extol him with *ṛk* hymns.'[3]

*Trita Āptya:*

The name Trita goes back to the Indo-Iranian period, but in the *Ṛigveda* Trita Āptya occupies quite an unimportant position, as he is not invoked independently in any hymn. The epithet *āptya* probably means 'watery' from *ap* 'water', and Macdonell thinks he represents 'the third (from *tri* "three", *tritas*=Gk. *Τριτος*) form of fire'.[4]

His main function was to help Indra in slaying Vṛtra[5] as well as Viśvarūpa, the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭṛ,[6] and releasing the cows. He is also spoken of with Agni and the Maruts, while, in the ninth book, he is said to have prepared and purified *soma*.[7]

LITERATURE

Hopkins, RI., p. 104.
Kaegi, RV., p. 33.
Macdonell, 'The god Trita', JRAS., July, 1893.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 67-8.
Muir, V, p. 336.
Oldenberg, RV., p. 143.

*Mātariśvan:*

This god is not celebrated independently in any hymn, and appears on the whole to be connected with Agni in some form or another, although there are passages in which he is distinguished from him, as, e.g. when he is said to have brought Agni the adorable priest, the dweller in heaven.[8] Oldenberg

[1] ibid. [2] II. 35. 10. 9. 4. [3] II. 35. 12.
[4] Macdonell, VR., p. 604[b]. [5] VIII. 7. 24.
[6] X. 8. 8. [7] IX. 34. 4.
[8] III. 2. 13; 9. 5; VI. 8. 4; I. 93. 6; 60. 1; III. 5. 10. I, 31. 3; 71. 4; 141. 3.

criticizes the opinion that Mātariśvan is nothing but a form of Agni, and thinks he is simply the Prometheus of the *Ṛigveda*.[1] Confused notions about the functions of the gods are not rare in the *Ṛigveda*, and therefore there is no reason to hold to either of these opinions exclusively of the other. Mātariśvan may have been thought of as the celestial form of Agni (thus representing lightning), and also as a person who brought the hidden fire from heaven to earth.[2] However, we feel inclined to favour the view which regards him primarily, as his name to a certain extent indicates, as a semi-divine being like Prometheus.[3]

The word appears to be of a purely Indian formation and probably means 'he who is formed in his mother', or 'growing in his mother', i.e. 'the thunderbolt'.[4] In later literature the word is regarded as a name of the wind.[5] Sāyaṇa, however, interpreted him as wind (*vāyu*) even in the *Ṛigveda*,[6] and Hillebrandt supports this opinion.[7]

LITERATURE

Griswold, RV., pp. 163, 215.
Hillebrandt, VM., II, pp. 140–53.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 71-2.
Muir, V, p. 204, n. 318.
Müller, PR. (1891), pp. 152-3.
Oldenberg, RV., p. 122, n. 1.

*Ahibudhnya and Aja Ekapād:*

Ahibudhnya, 'the serpent of the deep', and Aja Ekapād are very closely connected, and both of them later become two of the many names of Rudra or epithets of Śiva. Ahibudhnya was perhaps originally not different from Ahi Vṛtra,[8] although the former is invoked as a god. He is said to be born in

1 Oldenberg, RV., p. 122, n. 1.
2 Macdonell, VM., p. 72; Griswold, RV., p. 163.
3 See Muir, V, p. 204.
4 Macdonell, op. cit., p. 72.
5 e.g., in AV.; cf. Hillebrandt, VM., II, pp. 149ff.
6 e.g., X, 114. 1; see Griffiths' note on the passage.
7 ibid.
8 cf. I, 52. 6.

water (*abja*), sitting in the bottom (*budhna*) of the streams in the spaces,[1] and is prayed not to injure his worshippers.[2] Yāska interpretes *budhna* as meaning 'air'.[3]

There are various suggestions as to what Aja Ekapād originally represented. Roth and Grassmann regarded him as a genius of the storm, Bloomfield and Victor Henry as a solar diety, Hardy as the moon, 'the goat who goes alone', and Macdonell as 'a figurative designation of lightning, alluding to the agile swiftness of the goat'.[4]

[1] VII. 34. 16. [2] V. 41. 16. [3] Nir., I. 44. [4] VM., pp. 73-4.

CHAPTER XI

# TERRESTRIAL GODS

WE have till now dealt with heavenly and atmospheric gods and with them we soared into the ethereal regions created by the imagination of the Vedic poets, but with the terrestrial gods we also come down to the mundane earth. It may be true that some of the most poetical hymns have been spoiled by the ritualistic turn given to them, but the portion of the *Ṛigveda* which supplied us with information with regard to the above described gods is predominantly poetical. All the above gods are by their very nature detached from human existence. Human relations, powers as well as weaknesses, may have been attributed to them, they may have been regarded as supervising the deeds of men, as blessing or cursing them, they may have been praised for altogether selfish ends, but without the instrumentality of the terrestrial gods, such as Agni, Brahmaṇaspati and Soma, they could never have become anything more than pure creatures of fertile imagination.

And this instrumentality of Agni, at any rate, is frankly expressed in the *Ṛigveda* itself, because he is repeatedly said to be the messenger between heaven and earth, between men and gods. The Agni of the *Ṛigveda* is primarily the fire-altar on which the sacrifice is offered. It was by the side of this altar that the gods were invited to come in their chariots and sit down on the *kuśa* grass. It was through the smoke of the fire kindled on the altar by rubbing the two sticks that the offerings ascended to the Gods and the Fathers (*pitṛs*). In fact, the whole structure of early Indian religion was connected with fire and the offerings made in it. It was mainly these offerings and the pressing of the *soma*-juice that gave the heavenly gods their lasting character and immortality in the Hindu religion.

Thus, here we enter upon the very foundation of

Brahmanism and to some extent even of the Vedic religion. Only 'to some extent' of the Vedic religion, because the period through which the Vedic religion extended consists in our opinion of two parts. The first one was of pure Nature-worship, when sacrifices were offered but were as yet only of secondary importance; and the second, when this poetic nature of the religion began to diminish and when the hieratic religion began to overshadow the whole of the beliefs and practices of the Vedic Indians. When the Veda was compiled, the balance had already swayed to the side of ritual, and this tendency was given lasting permanence in the repeated references to sacrifice that we find scattered over the whole of the *Ṛigveda*.

This would explain the root cause of the two extremely divergent opinions held about the nature of Vedic religion. Some hold that it is sublime and purely poetical, others that it is a product of full-grown hieratic tendencies. Both of these can derive support from the same hymns, but both represent extremes and are wrong. It is, in fact, neither one nor the other. In our opinion, it represents a period when the old poetical, and therefore sublime, religion was drawing to a close, but when the unseemly sacerdotalism of the later time had not definitely appeared.

## *Agni*

Agni, 'fire', is by far the most important terrestrial god and even statistically he is second only to Indra. The physical phenomenon of fire being always present before the poets, anthropomorphism in the case of Agni is not much developed. His bodily parts are often described, but they always have 'a clear reference to the phenomenon of terrestrial fire mainly in its sacrificial aspect'.[1] Thus, he is said to be butter-formed,[2] butter-backed,[3] butter-haired,[4] butter-faced,[5] as issuing from butter,[6] and honey-tongued,[7] since butter and honey are regularly offered in fire at the sacrifice.

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 88. [2] III. 27. 5. [3] VII. 2. 4.
[4] VIII. 49. 2. [5] III. 1. 18. [6] V. 8. 6. [7] I. 44. 6; 60. 3.

Agni is also called *ghṛtānna* 'he whose food is butter',[1] and described with the following epithets: flame-haired and oil-clad;[2] dark-backed;[3] three- or seven-tongued;[4] seven-rayed and triple-headed;[5] of golden or shining teeth;[6] thousand-eyed,[7] hundred-eyed[8] and four-eyed;[9] thousand-horned;[10] smoke-bannered;[11] etc. He is all-devouring,[12] but wood, fuel, ghee and honey constitute his special food and melted butter his beverage, although, like other gods, he is fond of *soma* also. The poet says, 'I invoke Indra and Agni, the chief *soma*-drinkers'.[13] He is the sovereign of the woods,[14] who driven by the wind rushes through the woods like a bull.[15] His bright, clear, purifying, upward-going flames rise like a pillar in the sky and touch heaven with their tops.[16] Like an elephant he consumes the trees.[17] He is fair to behold—fair of face; of beautiful aspect[18]—white-hued, loud-voiced, and multiform.[19]

His brightness and his great power of consuming everything is often described. Resplendent Agni shines far and wide and with his greatness makes all things apparent.[20] (Formerly) the world was swallowed and concealed in darkness (but) Agni was born and light was manifested. The deities, the broad earth and the heavens and plants, as well as waters, glory in his friendship.[21] Kindled in the morning he rises like the sun, and chasing black night away he fills heaven, earth and air's mid-region.[22] When the brightly-beaming Agni is kindled, the turbid darkness flies, the heaven becomes resplendent, up rises the celestial morn, and the sun, ascending great heights, beholds the good and bad deeds of mortals.[23] For his glory he is extolled in the homes at eve and morn, he, whose statute is inviolate; decked with imperishable sheen, he shines refulgent like the sun, with

[1] VII. 3. 1. [2] III. 17. 1. [3] III. 7. 3. [4] III. 20. 2.
[5] I. 146. 1. [6] V. 2. 3; 7. 4. [7] I. 79. 12. [8] I. 128. 3.
[9] I. 31. 13; 97. 6. 7. [10] VI. 1. 18. [11] I. 27. 11; 94. 10. X. 4-5.
[12] VIII. 44. 26. [13] I. 21. 1; 94. 14. [14] I. 13. 11. [15] I. 58. 4, 5.
[16] VIII. 23. 20; I. 140. 1; VIII. 43, 31; VI. 15, 2. [17] I. 140. 2.
[18] VII. 2. 23; 3. 6; 1. 2. [19] VI. 6. 2. [20] V. 2. 9. [21] V. 88. 2.
[22] X. 88. 6; 3. 1; 88. 3. 5. [23] IV. i. 17. 19.

brilliance and fiery flame.[1] He is strong-jawed[2] as well as many-jawed;[3] and, possessed of sharp burning teeth,[4] the great consumer invades the forests and destroys them.[5] The noise made by the roaring of his flames is compared with the roaring waves of the sea,[6] with thunder,[7] or the roaring of a bull[8] or a lion.[9]

He is borne on a car of lightning, which is shining, golden and luminous.[10] It is drawn by beautiful, active, ruddy horses or mares which are butter-backed, wind-impelled, mind-yoked.[11] A charioteer of the sacrifice, he brings the gods to the offering—Varuṇa from heaven, Indra from the sky, the Maruts from the air[12]—in his car.

Agni's births are very variously described. He is said to be the wisest son of Dyaus,[13] or to have been generated by Dyaus,[14] or by Dyaus and Pṛthivī,[15] or by the Dawns,[16] or by Indra and Viṣṇu,[17] or again by the gods in general.[18] He is often described as having a triple birth.[19] The gods are said to have made him threefold,[20] with three heads,[21] three tongues, three bodies and three stations;[22] and this triple birth is in the *Ṛigveda* itself explained either as meaning that Agni was born first in heaven, next among men and then in the waters,[23] with which corresponds the order of Agni's abodes, heaven, earth and waters,[24] or that he was born first in houses, then at the base of great heaven, and thirdly in the womb of this atmosphere.[25] The three births appear to refer to the three manifestations of fire, viz., the sun in heaven, lightning in the atmosphere, and men-kindled fire on the earth;[26] but what exactly was meant is not quite clear. One commentator, Sakapuni, holds the

[1] II. 8. 3. 4. [2] V. 22. 4. [3] X. 79. 1. [4] IV. 15. 5; VIII. 23. 4.
[5] VIII. 43, 4; I. 143. 5; I. 94. 10; X. 79. 1. 2; I. 65. 4; X. 142. 4.
[6] I. 44, 12. [7] VIII. 91. 5. [8] I. 94. 10. [9] III. 2. 11.
[10] III. 94. 1; I. 141. 12; 140. 1.
[11] IV. 2. 2; II. 4. 2; 10. 2; I. 14. 6; 94. 10; 14. 6.
[12] I. 22. 3; X. 92. 1; 70. 11; VII. 11. 1.
[13] III. 25. 1. [14] X. 45. 8. [15] III. 2. 2. [16] VII. 78. 3.
[17] VII. 99. 3. [18] VI. 7. 1. [19] I. 95. 3. [20] X. 88. 10.
[21] I. 146. 1. [22] III. 20. 2. [23] X. 45. 1. [24] VIII. 44. 16.
[25] IV. 1. 11. [26] Muir, V, p. 206; Müller, PR., pp. 146-7, 151-2.

above view[1] and there seems to be some justification for it, since Agni is found to be identified with the sun,[2] and since the interpretation that the son of waters means the son of aerial waters in the form of lightning appears probable,[3] although we are inclined to think with Oldenberg[4] that there is no direct and clear proof that in this connexion the word 'waters' means aerial waters. Agni is often spoken of as born in the highest heaven; but whether this should be taken to mean the sun or the lightning is doubtful.[5] If, however, we could maintain that it means the sun, the position of Sakapuni would be very much strengthened and would probably be accepted; because in that case, there would be some similarity in the frequency with which each of the three births of Agni is referred to in the *Ṛigveda*, a thing which is otherwise wanting.

The terrestrial form of Agni is referred to in different ways. From the primitive method of producing fire by rubbing two sticks together, he is said to have sprung from two mothers[6] as a new-born infant,[7] and surprise is expressed at the fact that a living being should spring up from dry wood.[8] The two timber-sticks (*araṇīs*) are, however, sometimes spoken of as of opposite sex, the upper being the male and the lower the female.[9] Agni devours his parents as soon as he is born.[10] He is also said to have seven mothers[11] or to have been produced by ten maidens,[12] the vigilant and youthful daughters of Tvaṣṭṛ,[13] by which the ten fingers of the two hands appear to have been meant.[14]

Secondly, he is very frequently called the 'son' (*sūnu*, *putra* and once *yuvan*) 'of strength' (*sahasaḥ*). It most probably refers to the powerful friction that was necessary to

1 Macdonell, VM., p. 93; Muir, V, p. 207: Yāska, Nir., XII. 19.
2 III. 2. 14; X. 88. 6. 11. 12; VIII. 56. 5.
3 Macdonell, VM., p. 92.
4 RV., p. 115.
5 cf. Macdonell, op. cit., pp. 92-3.
6 I. 31. 2.
7 V. 9. 3.
8 I. 68. 2.
9 III. 29. 3.
10 X. 79. 4.
11 I. 141. 2; V. 11. 3.
12 I. 95. 2.
13 ibid.
14 Macdonell, op. cit., p. 91.

produce fire. Most authors accept this explanation[1] and the passage[2] that Agni 'rubbed with strength' (*sahasā*) on the surface of the earth, is regarded as supporting this explanation.[3]

Thirdly, he is spoken of as the 'son of herbs' (*sūnuṁ vanaspatīnām*)[4] or as born in wood,[5] or again as the embryo of plants.[6] Professor Macdonell remarks 'when he is called the embryo of trees,[7] or of trees as well as plants,[8] there may be a side-glance at the fire produced in forests by the friction of the boughs of trees.'[9] He is in addition called the 'navel' (*nābhi*) of the earth,[10] probably referring to his place on the altar. Since fire was to be produced every morning before the dawn, Agni is very often called the youngest,[11] and because he is to be produced again and again he is also called the ever-youthful.[12] At the same time, he is also called the ancient,[13] because no sacrificer is older than he,[14] and it was he who conducted the first sacrifice.[15]

The above described triple character of Agni's birth, says Professor Hopkins, 'is the oldest Indian trinity on which much of the mystical speculation of the Vedic age is based', and Professor Macdonell thinks a historical connexion between Agni's three births in the three divisions of the universe and the later Hindu trinity of Brahma-Viṣṇu-Śiva probable, the intermediate link of development being supplied by the triad, sun, wind and fire; or sun, Indra and fire.[16]

Sometimes he is said to have only two births (*dvijanman*),[17] the upper which is in heaven and the lower which is on the earth,[18] thus alluding to the two-fold division of the universe. Agni is to be produced every morning, in every altar and in

[1] e.g. Roth, ZDMG., XLIII, p. 593; Macdonell, VM., p. 91; Bloomfield, RV., p. 159; Oldenberg, RV., p. 121.

[2] VI. 48. 5. [3] Macdonell, VM., p. 91. [4] VIII. 23. 25.

[5] VI. 3. 3; X. 79. 7. [6] II. 1. 14; III. 1. 13. [7] I. 70. 4.

[8] II. 1. 1. [9] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 92. [10] I. 55. 2; X. 1. 6.

[11] I. 36. 6; 44. 4; 147. 2; III. 28. 2., etc.

[12] I. 146. 4; X. 1. 7; 2. 1, etc. [13] X. 4. 1, 2. [14] V. 3. 5.

[15] III. 15. 4. [16] Macdonell, VR., p. 605b.

[17] I. 60. 1; 140. 2; 149. 2, 3. [18] II. 9. 3; I. 128. 3; X. 45. 10.

every house, and consequently he is spoken of as having many births.[1] As kindled in many places, he is spoken of in the plural, but that a unity in its physical nature was perceived is clear from the passage which states that although 'scattered in many places, he is one and the same king'.[2] This may have in some degree contributed to the later important 'conception of a unity, pervading the many manifestations of the divine'.[3]

The importance of sacrifice in the succeeding periods of the history of Indian religions, makes it almost certain that the prominence of Agni in the *Ṛigveda* is due to his most intimate connexion with the sacrifice rather than the importance of physical fire to early men. The creation of the god of fire and the worship offered to him, was undoubtedly due originally to the difficulty of obtaining, and to the extreme usefulness of fire in primitive times; the Vedic Agni, however, soon outgrew this natural function of usefulness as fire for ordinary human needs, and by the end of the Ṛigvedic period became in the main the god of the sacrifice. Epithets like *gṛhapati*,[4] lord of the house, which is found very frequently, and *damūnas*,[5] 'domestic', which are almost exclusively his, are probably the remnants of his primitive significance.[6] He is called the first guest (*atithi*),[7] a guest in every house,[8] an immortal who has made his home among mortals.[9] He is also called one or other of the following relations, besides being called a kinsman[10] or the nearest kinsman:[11] father, brother,[12] son[13] and mother.[14] This intimacy between men and Agni and his being constantly called a friend is a characteristic peculiar to him.

[1] X. 5. 1; V. 1. 5; IV. 7. 1, 3; 'New-born each day', II. 9. 5.
[2] III. 55. 4.
[3] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 605b.
[4] I. 46-5; 60. 4; VII. 15. 7.
[5] III. 1. 7.
[6] Griswold, RV., pp. 132f., 154-5; Macdonell, VM., pp. 95-6; cf. also Bloomfield, RV., p. 159.
[7] V. 8. 2.
[8] X. 91. 2.
[9] VIII. 60. 1.
[10] I. 26. 3; X. 7. 3.
[11] VII. 15. 1; VIII. 49. 10.
[12] X. 7. 3; II. 1. 9.
[13] II. 1. 9.
[14] VI. 1. 5.

Nevertheless, the epithets may not be as primitive as they are sometimes considered to be.[1]

The chief and the most important function of Agni in the *Ṛigveda* is to officiate at the sacrifice. This is clearly brought out in the very first stanza with which the first book opens, and the whole hymn is very characteristic of him.

[2] 'Agni I praise, the household priest, 1.
God, minister of sacrifice,
Invoker, best bestowing wealth.

Agni is worthy to be praised 2.
By present as he was by seers of old:
May he to us conduct the gods.

Through Agni may we riches gain, 3.
And day by day prosperity
Replete with fame and manly sons.

The worship and the sacrifice, 4.
Guarded by Thee on every side,
Go straight, O Agni, to the gods.

May Agni, the invoker, wise 5.
And true, of most resplendent fame,
The god, come hither with the gods.

Whatever good thou wilt bestow, 6.
O Agni, on the pious man,
That gift comes true, O Angiras.

To thee, O Agni, day by day, 7.
O thou illuminer of gloom,
With thought we bearing homage come.

To thee the lord of sacrifice, 8.
The radiant guardian of the Law,
That growest in thine own abode.

[1] e.g. by Dr. Griswold, RV., pp. 154-5; cf. Bloomfield, RV., p. 159.
[2] As translated by Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 72-3.

So like a father to his son, 9.
Be easy of approach to us;
Agni, for weal abide with us.'

He is called the best[1] and the most skilful[2] priest (*ṛtvij*, I. 44, 11. *vipra*, VI. 15. 4.) with pleasant tongue;[3] but besides this generic designation he is also called the *purohita*,[4] 'domestic priest' or one who performs the duties that are specially assigned to the *hotṛ*,[5] the *adhvaryu*[6] and the *brahman*[7] priests. He is the most adorable, the most eminent *hotṛ* (priest) appointed not only by men but by gods also.[8] In some passages he is said to have been appointed by Manu.[9] As a priest he has to invoke or worship the gods, but the gods also honour him in their turn three times a day.[10] In his power over the sacrificial rites Agni is supreme. He is the king,[11] the sovereign lord,[12] the director,[13] as well as the supervisor,[14] the father,[15] the charioteer (*rathīr adhvarāṇām*),[16] and the 'banner[17] of the sacrifice' (*ketur yajñasya*). 'The priest, the best worshipper, is to be raised high by men's sacred oblations, so that he may secure the gracious favour of the gods.'[18]

Besides being known as the first and the best priest, he is constantly called the messenger (*dūta*) or the oblation-bearer (*havya-vaḥ* or *vāhana*).[19] This office has been conferred upon him by gods as well as by men,[20] because he knows the paths between the earth and the heaven,[21] the innermost recesses of heaven.[22] He is thus a swift[23] envoy between heaven and earth,[24] between gods and men,[25] who announces

[1] X. 53. 2. [2] I. 128. 1. [3] VII. 16. 9.
[4] I. 94. 6; I. 1. 1; III. 2, 8. *Agnir devānām abhavat purohitaḥ.*
[5] II. 1. 2. [6] III. 5. 4; II. 1. 2; I. 94. 6. [7] II. 1. 2; IV. 9. 4.
[8] X. 2. 1; 91. 8; VIII. 49. 1; X. 7. 5; VI. 16. 1. [9] I. 134; 31. 17.
[10] Macdonell, VM., p. 97; III. 25. 1; VII. 11. 3; III. 4. 2.
[11] III. 1. 18; IV. 3. 1; I. 1. 8. [12] I. 27. 1.
[13] II. 5. 2. *netā*, 'leader'. [14] VIII. 43. 24. [15] III. 3. 4.
[16] I. 44. 2. [17] VI. 2. 3. V. 96. 6. [18] IV. 2. 1; 1. 20.
[19] *Juṣṭo hi dūto asi havyavāhano-gne rathīradhvarāṇām*, I. 44. 2.
[20] VI. 15. 9; V. 8. 6; X. 46. 10.
[21] X. 98. 11; VIII. 7. 2; VI. 16. 3.
[22] IV. 7. 8. [23] X. 6. 4. [24] I. 59. 2. [25] IV. 2. 23.

the hymns to the immortals and either brings the gods to the sacrifice[1] so that they may sit on the strewn *kuśa* grass[2] and partake of the offerings,[3] or, receiving the oblations himself, transmits them to the gods, who do not get exhilarated unless they are brought by him. All the guileless immortal gods eat the oblations offered to them with Agni's mouth.[4]

Agni is specially rich in receiving epithets attributing wisdom. He is 'all-knowing' (*viśvavid*)[5] and 'possessed of all knowledge' (*viśvavedas*)[6] 'wise' (*vidvān*);[7] 'wise' (*praketā*),[8] he encompasses all wisdom as the felly of the wheel.[9] He is also the first, the eminent, and the most gracious or 'the wisest' (*vedhastama*)[10] 'seer' (*ṛṣi*);[11] and 'possessing the intelligence of a sage'[12] he is himself a great 'sage' (*kavi*) or an *Asura* among them.[13] The source of wisdom,[14] the first inventor of prayer,[15] he is a hymn-inspirer,[16] a thought-bestower.[17] He knows the rites and the sacrifices correctly, and knowing the proper seasons of the gods can rectify the mistakes of men.[18] He is said to be eloquent[19] and a 'singer' (*jaritṛ*) who 'utters heavenly words'.[20] The epithet *jātavedas* explained as meaning 'he who knows all generations (*viśva veda janimā*) is exclusively applied to Agni.[21]

Attributes of power and victory which are more particularly characteristic of Indra are, although much less frequently, applied to Agni also. He is said to be an Asura, a mighty 'monarch' (*samrāṭ*), as strong as Indra;[22] he is also the *Vṛtra*-slayer,[23] as well as the 'fort-destroyer'[24] (*puraṁdara*). He is invoked to drive away the Dasyus

[1] IV. 8. 2; III. 14. 2. [2] I. 31. 17; VIII. 44. 3.
[3] V. 1. 11. [4] II. 1. 14. [5] X. 91. 3.
[6] I. 44. 7. [7] I. 145. 5. [8] VII. 4. 4.
[9] Macdonell, VM., p. 97; see VII. 11. 1. [10] VI. 14. 2.
[11] III. 1. 17; X. 21. 5; II. 5. 3. [12] III. 21. 3; VI. 14. 2; I. 31. 1.
[13] *Kavi kratu*, Macdonell, op. cit., p. 97.
[14] III. 3. 4. [15] IV. 11. 3. [16] VI. 1. 1.
[17] VII. 13. 1. [18] X. 110. 11; 122. 2; 2, 4, 5.
[19] VI. 4. 4. [20] *Vipramda dyukṣavacasam.*
[21] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 97 and references.
[22] VII. 6. 1. [23] I. 74. 3. [24] V. 46.

with his weapon and is said to be a promoter of the Ārya.[1] Superior to all the gods in strength,[2] he is worshipped[3] by them, and men tremble at the mighty deeds which he performed in the days of yore.[4] Agni measured out the realms of air, made the lucid spheres of heaven, and, keeper and guard of immortality, he spread out all the worlds.[5] He has made the earth, the heaven and the wide firmament.[6] With his flame or his smoke he supported the vault of heaven, and with a hymn, heaven and earth.[7] Besides, he created all that flies, walks, stands, or moves;[8] and caused the sun to ascend the sky which he adorned with stars.[9]

Agni is also a great benefactor of humanity, but, unlike Indra who mainly grants victory in battles and power over enemies, Agni being extraordinarily rich in material blessings, bestows all manner of wealth and material prosperity. This contrast can be illustrated by quoting the exact words used by the Vedic poets themselves. 'Indra, the king supreme of earth and spacious heaven, is the lord of true power to be invoked in battle;'[10] while in a hymn to Savitṛ another poet sings: 'Agni I first invoke for our prosperity.'[11] The worshippers of Agni never lack prosperity. They become wealthy,[12] since he commands abundant wealth,[13] both in heaven and on the earth;[13] they live long,[12] because Agni is the lord, guardian and bestower of immortality;[14] and because all blessings issue from him as branches from a tree,[15] his worshippers are always blessed. They thus get abundant riches, plenty of food, incomparable sons[16] and deliverance from poverty, demons and all enemies generally, whom he consumes like dry bushes.[17]

1 VIII. 92. 1. 2 I. 68. 2.
3 X. 69. 9. 4 VIII. 92. 3; VII. 6. 2.
5 VI. 7. 7. 6 I. 36. 8.
7 III. 5. 10; IV. 6. 2; I. 67. 3. 8 X. 88. 4.
9 X. 156. 4; I. 68. 5; Macdonell, op. cit., pp. 98-9.
10 I. 100. 1. 11 I. 35. 1. 12 VI. 2, 4. 5.
13 I. 31. 10; VII. 6-7; X. 91. 3.
14 I. 31. 7; VII. 7. 7; 4. 6.
15 VI. 13. 1; 16 V. 25. 5. 17 IV. 4. 4.

'For Jātavedas let us press the *soma*:
May he consume the wealth of the malignant,
May Agni carry us through all our troubles,
Through all grief as a boat across a river'
(*nāveva sindhum*).[1]

In addition to bestowing general domestic welfare, Agni plays a very important part as a moral purifier and protector, second only to that played by Varuṇa.[2] The eye[3] and guardian of mighty *ṛta*, the omnipresent beholder of the deeds of men, he the wise god can distinguish between the wisdom and folly of mortals,[4] and so he is very frequently asked to keep men sinless, blameless, free from hatred of evil-minded enemies.

'O Agni, whose face is turned in all directions (*viśvatomukha*),[5] pardon, we pray, this sin of ours.[6] Forgive the sin that we may have through thoughtlessness committed and declare us guiltless before Aditi.[7]

'O Purifier,[8] may thy light chase our sins away.[9]
Preserve us, O Agni, from distress:
Eternal God, consume our enemies with thy hottest flames.
Be thou an iron fort, impregnable and strong, with a hundred walls for the protection of men;
O Infallible one, protect us eve and morn, day and night, from sorrow from sin.[10]

'O Agni, protect us from sinful men[11] and burn up our enemies whom fiends protect,[12] as thy beaming radiance boldly slayeth the darkness.'[13]

Besides these invocations for protection from mischievous enemies in general, Agni is often besought to expel the Rakṣases, to attack and annihilate the Yātudhānas and the

[1] I. 99. [2] Griswold, RV., pp. 166ff.; Oldenberg, RV., p. 201.
[3] X. 8. 5. [4] IV. 2. 11. [5] I. 97. 7; II. 10. 5.
[6] I. 31. 16. [7] IV. 12. 4; VIII. 93. 7. [8] III. 10. 8.
[9] *Apa naḥśośucadaghaṃ*, I. 99. [10] VII. 15. 13-15.
[11] I. 27. 3; 36, 15, 16. [12] I. 12. 5. [13] VIII. 43. 52.

Mūradevas, the life-devouring monsters. In addition to the references to these demons—which it is probable they were regarded as—there is a whole hymn of as many as twenty-five stanzas which is said to be addressed to *Agni rakṣohā* 'Agni the Rakṣas-killer'.[1] It is quite easy to connect Yātu with the modern vernacular word *jādū* and thus find a fully recognized class of persons called magicians on the evidence merely of the word Yātudhānas. In our opinion, however, both the Rakṣases and the Yātudhānas were evil spirits, the former being a genus of which the latter were a species,[2] and thus the latter word should not, in the *Ṛigveda* at any rate, be translated as 'sorcerers'. If the Yātudhānas then meant 'sorcerers' it would have to be supposed that the Vedic Indians abhorred and detested them more than anything else in the world, and to speak of human beings, however evil-minded, along with the demons would be more than extraordinary. Then again, they would have to be declared as the eaters of human flesh and horses, as they are expressly stated to be.[3] It would be almost impossible to explain their entering the human body and their particular aversion for the sacrifice.[4] On the other hand, the opinion expressed above would do away with all the difficulties.

Instances of drawing seemingly unassailable conclusions by translating a word loosely and sometimes even wrongly, are not rare in Vedic controversies. An interesting specimen of this occurs in the book by Dr. Griswold.[5] After remarking that 'anthropological researches have abundantly shown the large place that magic holds in the life of primitive man',[6] he quotes four passages from the *Ṛigveda* which, he concludes, indicate a strong belief in the magic spell. If the

[1] X. 87. [2] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 163.
[3] X. 87. 16. 17. [4] VIII. 49. 10; VII. 104, 18, 20; X. 182. 3.
[5] RV., pp. 155-6.
[6] This general statement is true; but it should at the same time be borne in mind that anthropological evidence does not and cannot make inflexible and inviolable rules. Moreover, *primitive man* is a phrase of extraordinary vagueness and should therefore be more clearly defined.

important words in the passages were correct translations of the original, the conclusion would not be unjustifiable. But that is not the case. In the first passage the word *aghaśaṁse* is translated by 'on him of evil spells', but it properly means 'those bent on mischief' or 'malevolent' or 'false'; in the second, *rakṣasvinaḥ* is translated by 'sorcerers', which is undoubtedly incorrect. In the third passage, the word *śaṁsa* which properly speaking means 'a hymn of praise' is translated by the word 'curse', and in the fourth passage the word *duḥśaṁsa* is also translated by the same word. These translations, to say the least, are misleading. If this method were generally adopted, we could probably derive any meaning that suits our argument. What we mean to point out here is, however, simply this, that there is not sufficient evidence in the *Ṛigveda* to show that fire was used for express magical purposes. Nor is there clear evidence to show that the notion that the kindling of fire exercised a magical influence on the sunrise existed in the *Ṛigveda*, although it may probably be true to hold with Professor Macdonell, that it does not seem 'to be *entirely* absent'.[1]

### *Soma*

To the praise of this god are devoted all the one hundred and fourteen hymns contained in book IX and about half a dozen others found in other books. He forms a pair with four gods, Indra, Agni, Pūṣan and Rudra, and is thus invoked as a dual divinity in half a dozen more hymns. The number of hymns in which he is invoked gives Soma the third place in the *Ṛigveda*, the first two places being given to Indra and Agni.

His physical basis, which are the *soma* plant and the juice, being always clear, anthropomorphism in the case of this god, as in the case of Agni, is not much advanced. We have already seen that this god seems to have belonged to at least the Indo-Iranian period, and his importance in the *Ṛigveda* is due only to the importance of the *soma*-sacrifice

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 98; Oldenberg, RV., p. 109; SBE., XLVI, p. 330.

itself. *Soma* was thus regarded as the 'soul of the sacrifice' *ātmā yajñasya*.[1]

The sacrificial importance of the plant soon gave it a high place in the vegetable kingdom and especially among herbs. Soma is therefore said to have been born as the lord of plants,[2] or the plants are said to have Soma as their king.[3] He is the 'lord of the wood'[4] (*vanaspati*), as well as the generator of all plants.[5] The original home of the plant is said to be both on the earth and in heaven; but its celestial origin is particularly emphasized. With reference to his terrestrial origin he is said to be *maujavata* (produced on Mount Mujavat),[6] or generally as 'growing or dwelling on the mountains', *parvatāvṛdh* or *giriṣṭhā*.[7] His place is also said to be in the highest heaven[8] from where he looks down on earth and regards all beings,[9] or from where he is spoken of as having been received by earth.[10] The intoxicating juice is often called the 'child of heaven'.[11] He also occupies,[12] or is the lord of,[13] or is purified in,[14] heaven and stands above all worlds like the god Sūrya.[15]

*Soma* is said to have been brought to the earth or given to Indra by an eagle, and this myth is frequently referred to. The eagle or the falcon, *śyena*, swift as thought, going to heaven pierced the iron fortress, brought down the plant and gave it to the thunder-wielder Indra.[16]

Soma is also called a king in general, a king of the whole earth, of the gods and mortals, or of rivers only.[17] He is the lord of strengthening food, who swims in water and roars in wood; the god of lofty ordinance, dear to the deities, friend of the gods,[18] the father of the earth and heaven.[19]

Most of the description of this god, however, refers to the juice as it is being pressed out of the plant, and still more

[1] IX. 2, 10; 6. 8. [2] IX. 114. 2. [3] IX. 97. 18, 19.
[4] I. 91. 6; IX. 12. 7. [5] I. 91. 22. [6] X. 34. 1.
[7] IX. 46. 1. [8] IX. 86. 15; X. 108. 1.
[9] IX. 71. 9. [10] IX. 61. 10. [11] IX. 38. 5.
[12] IX. 85. 9. [13] IX. 86. 11, 33. [14] IX. 86. 22; 83. 2.
[15] IX. 54. 3. [16] VIII. 89. 8; IV. 27. 1; III. 43. 7.
[17] IX. 97. 58, 24; 86. 10; 8. 1, 2. [18] IX. 108; 7-9. [19] IX. 90. 1.

particularly to its being filtered, mixed and poured from one vessel into the other, and to the exhilarating and stimulating effect that it produces in the drinker, and especially in Indra, who is the greatest *soma*-drinker.

IX. 1. 'In sweetest and most gladdening stream flow pure, O Soma, on thy way, 1.
Pressed out for Indra, for his drink.
Fiend-queller, friend of all men, he hath with the plank attained unto his place, his iron-fashioned home. 2.
Flow onward with thy juice unto the banquet of the mighty gods: 4.
Flow hither for our strength and fame.'

IX. 61. 'Flow onward then, who strengthenedst Indra to slaughter Vṛtra, who 22.
Encompassed and stayed the mighty floods.
O Pavamāna, hither bring great riches, and destroy our foes: 26.
O Indra, grant heroic fame.
Glorify us among the folk.' 28.

IX. 63. 'Driving the Rakṣases afar, O Soma, bellowing pour for us 29.
Most excellent and splendid strength.
Soma, do thou secure for us the treasures of the earth and heaven, 30.
Indra, all boons to be desired.'[1]

The broad-based stone[2] is raised high to press the juice out of the plant, and women learn its rising and falling motions. The churning-staff is bound with cords as a horse with reins and, resounding like the drums of victors, the mortar is prayed to press the *soma*-juice for Indra.[3] It was probably to be found in every house, as a thing useful for domestic purposes.[4] 'The stones (*grāvāṇaḥ* or *adrayaḥ*), mightier than

[1] See also IX. 2; 6; 22; etc.
[2] *Grāvā pṛthubudhna ūrdhvo bhavati sātave*, I. 28. 1.
[3] I. 28. 1, 3, 4-6. [4] ibid. 5.

heavens, press out the *soma*, they milk the juice of the cows.'[1] 'With their green tinted mouths, the stones cry aloud to us; they taste the offered food even before the *hotar*.'[2] 'These stones, unwearied, undecaying (*ajaraḥ*), eternal (*amṛtyavaḥ*), with ten conductors ten-fold girt, the well-pastured bulls, devour the branch of the red-coloured tree and bellowing loudly they call on Indra to come to the strong exhilarating drink which they have now found and effused in copious streams.'[3]

The stones are said to be yoked by the two arms, or guided by ten reins, meaning the ten fingers.[4]

> 'Pressed by the stones, with hymns, and graciously inclined, illuminating both the parents, heaven and earth,
> He flows in ordered season onward through the fleece, a current of sweet juice still swelling day by day.'[5]

The pressing, filtering and mixing were indeed the three stages in the preparation of the sacred drink which were supposed to be ritualistically very important.

During the time of the *Ṛigveda* at least two distinct methods of pressing the juice out of the *soma* plant appear to have been known, viz., with the 'mortar' (*ulūkhala* or *ulūkhalaka*) and with the 'pressing-stones' (*grāvāṇaḥ*). Both of these sets of instruments are considered important enough to be independently invoked like the gods. The former is invoked in part of the hymn I. 28, and the latter in three whole hymns, all of which, however, occur in the last book.[6]

The juice—as well as the plant—is said to be 'tawny' (*hari*), or 'brown' (*babhru*), or 'ruddy' (*aruṇa*), and is described as purified with the hands, or by the ten fingers or by prayer or sometimes by the daughter of the sun.[7] The 'sweet' (*madhumat*)[8] juice is either said to be pressed

[1] X. 76. 6, 7. [2] X. 94. 2. [3] X. 94. 11, 8, 7, 3, 4.
[4] X. 76. 2; 94. 7. [5] IX. 75. 4. [6] 76, 94, and 175.
[7] Macdonell, VM., p. 105; IX. 86. 34; 8. 4; 96, 13; 113, 5, 3.
[8] IX. 97. 11.

(*sūta*),[1] or 'milked' (*dugdha*),[2] and the priests who press *soma* are called the Adhvaryus.[3]

The *soma*-juice which is only just pressed, is considered to be impure, since to be worthy of going to the feast of the gods it must be purified by filtering through the strainer of sheep's wool.[4] This juice is then said to be 'pure' (*śuddha*) or 'bright' (*śuci* or *śukra*).[5] The drops falling from the strainer are often graphically described. They are called the thousand-streamed Soma and are compared with race-horses, racing cars and armies moving in battle;[6] 'with his thousand currents he speeds to the reservoir passing through the filter bellowing like a bull.'[7] He is repeatedly asked to flow on;[8] on to Indra as a gladdening juice, most sweet, intelligent; 'on to the realm of earth, on to the realm of heaven in thy righteous ways, on to win us strength.'[9]

IX. 106. O Indu, with thy streams, in might, flow for the banquet of the gods; 7.
Rich in wealth, Soma, in our beaker take thy place.
Thy drops that swim in water have exalted Indra to delight: 8.
The gods have drunk thee up for immortality.
Stream opulence to us, ye drops of *soma*, pressed and purified, 9.
Pouring down rain from heaven in floods and finding light.
Soma, while filtered, with his wave flows through the long wool of the sheep, 10.
Shouting while purified before the voice of song.

These words are of very common occurrence and are characteristic of the hymns to Soma Pavamāna. This epithet

[1] IX. 62. 5. [3.
[2] III. 36. 6. *Tāṁ vāṁ dhenuṁ na vāsariṁ aṁśuṁ duhaty adribhiḥ*, I. 137.
[3] VIII. 4. 11.
[4] IX. 69. 9.
[5] VIII. 2. 10; IX. 33. 2; I. 5. 5; 30. 2.
[6] Griswold, RV., p. 230. IX. 97. 20.
[7] IX. 86. 7.
[8] IX. 108. 1; 107. 24, 23.
[9] Macdonell, op. cit., p. 106.

'*pavamāna*' is constantly applied to Soma and probably means, 'flowing clear'[1] or 'cleansing', 'purifying' or 'self-purifying' as Dr. Griswold[2] takes it, and refers undoubtedly to the process of filtration.

Through the filter the *soma* flows into vats (*droṇa*)[3] or jars (*kalaśa*),[3] where the juice is mixed with other things and thus formed into different mixtures. It is mixed with water as well as ghee, but the three mixtures to which the term *tryāśir*[4] refers are formed with milk, sour milk and barley, from which they are called the *gavāśir*, *dadhyāśir* and *yavāśir*.[5]

Soma's intimate connexion with water in the form of rain, and with streams and oceans, is probably due to the fact that the juice is sometimes mixed with water. He is said to be the lord and king of streams,[6] or an oceanic (*samudriya*) king and god.[7] Waters are Soma's sisters,[8] who follow his ordinance.[9] He rules over rain, which he strives to win for men and which he actually streams from heaven.[10] He is also said to dwell in the stream's wave.[11] He is a youth among waters, their child, their embryo.[12] He, the thousand-streamed increaser of water, was the first who spread the sea to the gods.[13]

When *soma*, the immortal stimulant,[14] is thus pressed by men and mixed with milk, all the gods desiring exhilaration drink it[15] to gain strength and become exhilarated.[16] All the gods love it,[17] even the Fathers[18] were stimulated to action

[1] RV., p. 228. It may be remarked here that the opinion of Dr. Griswold (RV., p. 23, in agreement with Oldenberg RV., p. 459), that the filtering of *soma*-drops through the strainer is a sample of sympathetic magic to secure the fall of rain, appears to us to be far-fetched and unfounded, just as much as his opinion that the kindling of fire before the dawn is a piece of sympathetic magic to secure the rising sun.

[2] IX. 3. 1. [3] IX. 60. 3. [4] V. 27. 5.
[5] Macdonell, op. cit., pp. 106-7. [6] IX. 86. 33; 89. 2.
[7] IX. 107. 16. [8] IX. 82. 3, 5. [9] IX. 74. 3; 90. 4; 97. 17.
[10] IX. 12. 3. [11] IX. 9. 5; 86. 36; 97. 41. [12] I. 84. 4.
[13] IX. 107. 23. (*sahasradhāraṁ payovṛdhaṁ*) IX. 108. 8.
[14] IX. 109. 15, 2. [15] VIII. 58. 11. [16] IX. 85. 2.
[17] IX. 96. 11. [18] IX. 85. 3.

by drinking it, but of Indra it is the soul.[1] Soma exhilarates Varuṇa, Viṣṇu, Mitra, the Maruts, Vāyu as well as Heaven and Earth,[2] but he is repeatedly asked to flow for Indra's sake. By drinking *soma*, Indra gets intoxicated. In this intoxication he becomes irresistible[3] and slays all foes, but especially Vṛtra.[4] It was in the companionship of Soma that Indra performed most of his great deeds.[5] Through this constant association with Indra, Soma receives some epithets which are peculiar to Indra and becomes a warrior to a certain extent.[6] Thus he is called the Vṛtra-slayer (*vṛtrahan*), or the fort-destroyer,[7] or a victor, unconquered in fight, born for battle,[8] who had caused the sun to shine,[9] generated the two worlds[10] and supported heaven.[11] He is ever victorious and conquers every kind of gift for his worshippers.[12] With his sharp weapons[13] he drives away and slays the goblins (hence called *rakṣohan*)—and other foes.[14] The epithet 'slayer of the wicked' is almost exclusively his.[15] Like Indra, Soma is also attended by the Maruts, who are said to milk the bull of heaven and to adorn the child when born.[16] Himself the best of charioteers, Soma drives in the same car as Indra.[17]

The medical properties of herbs were known to men from very early times, and Soma, the king of plants, was naturally thought to possess medical qualities of curing diseases. A poet says: 'When the sun rose up, I took some *soma*, the sick man's medicine';[18] and another: 'Soma doctors all sickness (*bhiṣakti*), the blind man sees, the lame walks'.[19] The juice is also said to stimulate the voice, which Soma impels

[1] IX. 90. 5; 97. 42. [2] VI. 47. 2.
[3] IX. 61. 22; 1. 10. [4] II. 15. 1; 19. 2.
[5] Hymns VI. 72 and VII. 104 are addressed to Indra and Soma.
[6] IX. 88. 2. [7] I. 91. 21. [8] IX. 37. 4; 28. 5.
[9] IX. 90. 1. [10] VI. 44. 24.
[11] IX. 66. 17; 78. 4; 49. 4; 52. 1. [12] IX. 61. 30; 96. 16.
[13] IX. 49. 5; X. 25. 7. [14] IX. 28. 6.
[15] VI. 47. 5; IX. 108. 11; 96. 17.
[16] IX. 66. 26; 96. 2. cf. also IX. 15. 1; 87. 9; 103. 5.
[17] VIII. 61. 17; cf. also I. 91. 22.
[18] VIII. 68. 2; X. 25. 11. [19] IX. 95. 5, 2.

as the rower his boat.[1] The *soma*-juice is called *amṛta* (the draught of immortality)[2] and the gods drink it to attain immortality.[3] He confers immortality on the gods as well as men.

The following passages[4] clearly bring out the benefits that were believed to result from drinking *soma*:

VIII. 48. 'I have partaken wisely of the sweet food 1.
That stirs good thoughts, best banisher of trouble,
The food round which all deities and mortals,
Calling it honey-mead, collect together.'

'We have drunk Soma and become immortal; 3.
We have attained the light the gods discovered.
What can hostility now do against us?
And what, immortal god, the spite of mortals?'

'Thou, as the guardian of our body, Soma, surveying men, in every limb hast settled.' 9 *a-b*.

'These glorious, freedom-giving drops, when drunk by me, 5.
Have knit my joints together as do thongs a car.
May these protect me now from fracturing a limb.
And may they ever keep me from disease remote.'

'The drop drunk deeply in our hearts, O Fathers, 18 *a-b*.
Us mortals that mortal god has entered.'

[1] IX. 110. 4. [2] IX. 106. 8. [3] I. 91. 6. 1.
[4] As translated by Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 79-81.

'Away have fled those ailments and diseases; 11.
The powers of darkness have been all affrighted.
With mighty strength in us has Soma mounted:
We have arrived where men prolong existence.'

'King Soma, gracious be to us for welfare: 8 *a-b*.
We are thy devotees; of that be mindful.'

Soma is many-eyed[1] and farseeing[2] and surveys all creatures.[3] He knows the generations of the gods[4] and, priest among gods,[5] he assigns to them their portions in the sacrifice.[6] He is also called the 'soul of the sacrifice',[7] he who protects wisdom or 'poetry' (*kāvya*), a leader of poets, a seer among priests,[8] 'a protector of prayer'.[9] The epithet *vācaspati*,[10] the 'lord of speech', is probably due to the belief that Soma stimulates the voice.[11] He declares the law; he is true of speech as well as true of action.[12] He is the wise seer,[13] the *kavi*, *vipra*, *ṛṣi*, *vicakṣaṇa* and wondrous (*adbhuta*).[14]

According to the *Ṛigveda*, *soma* was to be pressed three times a day, and each pressing was allotted to a different god or gods, Indra having, however, the liberty of monopolizing all. The morning pressing belonged to Agni,[15] the one at noon to Indra[16] and that in the evening to the Ṛbhus.[17] But the *soma*-offering was not either compulsory or fixed. It could be performed by anyone at his own free will, but

[1] IX. 26. 5. [2] IX. 107. 24. [3] IX. 71. 9.
[4] IX. 97. 7. [5] IX. 96. 6. [6] X. 85. 19.
[7] IX. 6. 8. [8] IX. 96. 6. [9] VI. 52. 3.
[10] IX. 26. 4; 101. 5. [11] Macdonell, VM., p. 109; IX. 97. 32.
[12] *Ṛtam vadan nṛtadyumna satyavadant satyakarman/Śraddhāvadant soma rājan dhātrā soma pariṣkṛtaḥ.* IX. 113. 4.
[13] IX. 107. 7. [14] IX. 83. 4. [15] Griswold, RV., p. 233.
[16] III. 32. 1, 2; VIII. 37. 1; IV. 36. 7. [17] IV. 33. 11.

probably it was already so complicated and expensive that only the rich could afford it.

The word *soma*, in the Brāhmaṇas, the Upanishads, and in later Sanskrit literature regularly means the moon. From this, and from the fact that in some of the passages in the *Ṛigveda* itself the word signifies the physical moon, Hillebrandt[1] had powerfully argued that *soma* meant the moon everywhere in the *Ṛigveda*. This view was opposed by most Sanskrit scholars, and in the extreme form in which the author had put it forward it appears to have been almost unanimously abandoned. It is now held that except in a few passages, *soma* everywhere in the *Ṛigveda* clearly refers to the plant and its juice and that its later identification with the moon was to a certain extent due to the belief in the immortality-bestowing quality of the juice, and to the belief that the juice which bestowed immortality (i.e. nectar) was found in the moon. It might have also been due to the fact that the *soma* plant was believed to be of celestial origin, but brought down to earth.

LITERATURE

Griswold, RV., pp. 209–43.
Hillebrandt, VM., I.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 112–26.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 77–81.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 104–14.
Muir, V, pp. 258–71.
Oldenberg, RV., pp. 175–85, 451–61 and 599–612.
ZDMG., XLVIII, p. 419f.; XXXV, pp. 680–92.

### *Bṛhaspati*

Bṛhaspati, who is invoked alone in eleven whole hymns and with Indra in two others, has already attained a prominent position in the *Ṛigveda*. He is closely connected with prayer, or rather with hymns, and is often invoked as Brahmaṇaspati, 'lord of prayer, (or hymns)'. He is also called the 'sage of sages', 'the supreme lord', 'the controller', 'the

[1] VM., I.

leader' and the generator of hymns.[1] From this connexion with hymns he is naturally called a *brahman*, 'praying priest'.[2] But he is also called *purohita*,[3] a 'domestic priest', a term which is more particularly applied to Agni. His song goes to heaven,[4] or he himself pronounces the hymn in which Indra, Varuṇa, Mitra, Aryaman and the gods rejoice.[5]

Through this connexion with the composition and the recitation of hymns which themselves formed an important part of the sacrifice, Bṛhaspati is associated with sacrifice and often identified with Agni. Thus the gods are said to have obtained their share of sacrifice from Bṛhaspati.[6] Bṛhaspati again promotes the yoking of devotion, and without him sacrifice does not succeed.[7] Like Agni, Bṛhaspati is called the 'son of strength',[8] the Aṅgiras,[9] and is said to burn the evil spirits[10] or to ascend to the upper abodes, to heaven.[11] In many passages, however, he is distinguished from Agni.[12]

Bṛhaspati has also another and a totally different aspect. Here he appears as a great hero and a fighter, described in the same terms as Indra. He is said to be great; and possessed of strength,[13] he is scatheless (*anarvāṇa*).[14] Mighty like the bull[15] he cleaves the mountains.[16] He roars like a lion,[17] he roars loudly like a bull.[18] Thundering like heaven he discovered the dawn, the sun, the cow and the lightning.[19] He bowed down the things that should be bowed down, stormed the forts of Śambara and entered the mountain full of treasures.[20] He was girt by friends, who cried in swan-like voice when he cleft the stony barriers and found the cows.[21] He thus receives the epithets *adribhit*[22] or *durgahā*[23] 'mountain-render', and *abhikṣya*[24] the 'cloud-god'. A victor, he is extolled in battle.[25]

1 II. 23. 1, 2, 16, 19; I. 190. 1.
2 II. 1. 3; IV. 50. 8. Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 101.
3 II. 24. 9.
4 I. 190. 4.
5 I. 40. 5.
6 II. 23. 1.
7 I. 18. 7.
8 I. 40. 2.
9 II. 23. 18.
10 II. 23 14.
11 X. 67. 10.
12 II. 25. 3; III. 20. 5; etc.
13 I. 190. 8.
14 I. 190. 1.
15 I. 190. 1, 6.
16 VI. 73. 1; X. 182. 1.
17 X. 67. 9.
18 VI. 73. 1.
19 X. 67. 10.
20 II. 24. 2; cf. X. 108. 11.
21 X. 67. 3, 11.
22 VI. 73. 1.
23 X. 182. 1.
24 X. 68. 12.
25 X. 67. 9; II. 24. 9.

He is said to possess a 'sword of gold' (*hiraṇyavāśi*)[1] and his terrible shining car is said to slay the foes, destroy the demons, break open the stalls of cows and find the light.[2] He is also said to be armed with swift and truly strung bow and excellent arrows,[3] and with an iron axe.[4] But he can accomplish equally great deeds by means of a hymn. With a hymn he cleft Vala and drove the cows forth; dispelled darkness and made heavenly light manifest.[5] He is also said to be borne by strong horses of tawny hue.[6]

He is pure, holy, the first-born,[7] a 'leader of riches' (*revanya*), healer of disease, possessor of wealth, increaser of store,[8] a good protector and kind prosperer.[9] He is also called lord of cattle and preparer of paths.[10]

He chastises the spiteful,[11] but, possessed of all boons,[12] he is a friend[13] and father to his worshippers.[14] A liberal giver, he is repeatedly implored to enable the worshippers to overcome all difficulties, to prolong life and grant other rewards.[15] He leads people with his good guidance and protects them.[16] 'He whose fire is kindled, whose prayer done and oblation offered shall conquer his enemies.'[17] 'The godly shall subdue the godless, the worshipper shall share the meal of him who worships not.'[18] 'He who worships the lord of hymn, the father of the gods, with a faithful heart and offers an oblation', obtains many blessings for himself and his clan.[19]

There is hardly any other deity of the *Ṛigveda* so obscure with regard to its original nature and so difficult to explain as Bṛhaspati. Although Hillebrandt[20] put forward the view that Bṛhaspati was the lord of planets and a personification of the moon, which was also the view of Hardy,[21] Bṛhaspati does not appear to have had any physical basis.[22]

1 VII. 97. 7. 2 II. 23. 3. 3 II. 24. 8. 4 X. 53. 9.
5 II. 24. 3, 14. 6 VII. 97 5. 7 VII. 97. 7; VI. 73. 1.
8 I. 18. 2. 9 II. 23. 5, 9. 10 X. 67. 8; II. 23. 6. 11 I. 190. 5.
12 *Viśvavāra*, VII. 97. 4. 13 I. 190. 6. 14 VI. 73. 1; VII. 97. 2.
15 VII. 97. 2, 4; X. 68. 12. 16 II. 23. 4. 17 II. 25. 1.
18 II. 26. 1. 19 II. 26. 3. 20 VM., I, pp. 404, 418-9.
21 Hardy, VBP., pp. 46-7. 22 Hopkins, RI., p. 136.

But even if he represented no phenomenon of nature, there must have been some idea behind his formation into a god. It is, however, very difficult to determine this. If he shares some epithets belonging more particularly to Agni, and shows a close connexion with the sacrifice by being the 'lord of prayer', as attested by his second name Brahmaṇaspati, almost all the great deeds of Indra are attributed to him and are described as having been performed by Bṛhaspati. Thus, on the one hand he appears to be a priestly god, and on the other like Indra to be a god of warlike strength. This confusion has naturally led to different views. Thus Max Müller[1] and others[2] considered him to be a form of Agni, Oldenberg[3] and Kaegi[4] as an abstraction of priestly action, while Hopkins,[5] interpreting him as the 'Lord of strength', follows Weber and regards him as 'a priestly abstraction of Indra'. One of the oldest views was that of Roth, according to whom Bṛhaspati is a sacerdotal god and a direct personification of the power of devotion: while the most recent view is that of Professor Macdonell who, calling him an abstract deity, regards him as an 'indirect personification of the sacrificial aspect of Agni'.[6] But to regard him either as a direct personification of prayer or devotion or an abstract deity representing prayer or 'spell'[7]—two views meaning very nearly the same thing—is to assign an exceptional position to Bṛhaspati, since he would then be the only important abstract deity found in the oldest as well as the newest parts of the *Ṛigveda*. Prayer, or to be more accurate a well-composed hymn of praise, is undoubtedly regarded as both important and powerful, but its personification to such an extent appears improbable.

Nor can we believe that Bṛhaspati was from the beginning an indirect personification of the sacrificial aspect of Agni. This would be firstly to overlook many passages in which

1 *Vedic Hymns*, SBE., XXXII, p. 94.
2 Langlois and H. H. Wilson; Macdonell, VM., p. 104.
3 RV., pp. 66-8, 381-2. 4 RV., p. 32. 5 RI., pp. 54, 135-6.
6 ZVR., pp. 606b—7a. 7 ibid.

Bṛhaspati is distinguished from Agni, secondly to leave the fact that he appears as a warlike god unaccounted for; and thirdly to take the improbable position of denying him an originally distinct and definite function. But the third objection will not be applicable if Professor Macdonell's view refers only to Bṛhaspati as he is found in the *Ṛigveda* and not to his original character.

In our opinion, Bṛhaspati is an Indra-ized sacrificial deity, or a sacrificial deity made warlike on account of the looseness with which the Vedic gods are generally praised. Originally, he was a god who supervised the composition and recitation of hymns. This being an important function in the sacrifice, he became connected with the sacrifice, and also with Agni who was the chief sacrificial deity. This view is different from the view of Professor Macdonell, in that it does not make Bṛhaspati merely an aspect of Agni but an independent deity. He came to be associated with and to share the epithets of Agni, because the functions of both related to the same sphere of action, viz. the sacrifice.

LITERATURE

Barth, RI., pp. 15–6.
Bloomfield, RV., pp. 243–4.
Griswold, RV., pp. 168–75.
Hillebrandt, VM, I, pp. 404–25.
Hopkins, RI., pp. 135–6.
Kaegi, RV., pp. 73–4.
Macdonell, *Hymns*, pp. 75–7.
Macdonell, VM., pp. 101–4.
Muir, V, pp. 272–83.
Roth, ZDMG., I, pp. 72–80.

*Other terrestrial deities*

*Pṛthivī:*

Pṛithvī, the goddess of Earth, is not very important in the *Ṛigveda*, and whatever importance she had has been already dealt with in Chapter V.

*Rivers:*

Among other phenomena of nature the Vedic poets invoked rivers also. The hymn X. 75. is said to be dedicated to rivers, and the first stanza refers to them collectively as *sapta sapta tridhā*, 'triply seven and seven', while the fifth and the sixth mention the tributaries; but the rest of the hymn is really an invocation addressed only to the Sindhu. 'Sindhu is said to surpass all streams in power, to whom the rivers run, as mothers to their calves, and who leads the streams as the king his army. Beaming with her might, she is rich in good steeds, in vigorous mares, in cars and robes and gold; she rushes on roaring like a bull, like floods of rain that fall thundering from the cloud.'[1]

In another hymn (III. 33) the sister streams Vipāś and Śutudri are extolled. This hymn is in fact a dialogue between the two rivers and the sage Viśvāmitra.[2] The waters of the two rivers issuing from the bosom of the mountains hasten downwards; they, flowing together, speed to the ocean as if on chariots. The thunder-wielder Indra smote Vṛtra and dug out channels for these rivers, and the deft-handed Savitṛ, the god, led them. Issuing from him they flow expanded.[3]

Although Sindhu is often mentioned in the hymns of the *Ṛigveda*, the river which is mentioned and invoked oftener is Sarasvatī.[4] The personification also is more advanced in her case than in that of any other river, including Sindhu. 'Among the rivers Sarasvatī stands alone in purity; surpassing others in greatness she goes from mountains to the ocean as if on a car.'[5] 'I will sing a lofty song to Sarasvatī, the divine among streams; I will exalt her with hymns and praises.'[6] 'Accept with gladness, Sarasvatī, these offerings and this praise of ours, which we offer with adoration; placing us under thy dearest protection, may we approach

[1] X. 75. 1–4, 7–8.
[2] *Saṁvādo nadībhirviśvāmitrasya.* [3] III. 33. 1-2, 6.
[4] Sarasvatī is invoked in three whole hymns, VI. 61; VII. 95, 96.
[5] VII. 95. 1, 2. [6] VII. 96. 1.

thee as a tree for shelter.'[1] She is a purifier as well as the bestower of wealth, progeny, protection and immortality.[2] She stimulates, directs and prospers the devotions of her worshippers, conquers their enemies and destroys the revilers of the gods.[3] The seven-sistered goddess (*saptasvasā devī*), Sarasvatī is said to have discovered the rivers; shining with might among the mighty she has made the five tribes prosper.[4]

Sarasvatī is often invoked with other gods such as Pūṣaṇ and Indra,[5] but more particularly with the Maruts[6] who are said to be her friends;[7] and several times associated in the *āprī* or *āpra* hymns with the sacrificial goddesses Iḷā and Bhāratī, and sometimes also with Mahī and Hotrā. In the Brāhmaṇas she is identified with the goddess of speech, and in later Sanskrit literature she becomes the goddess of eloquence and wisdom in general.

Of what particular stream Sarasvatī was the personification, is not certain. According to some[8] it may have been the Avestan river Haraquaiti in Afghanistan, since the name Haraquaiti is identical with Sarasvatī; or according to others[9] it may have merely meant a mighty stream. Max Müller,[10] on the other hand, identified it with the small river Sarasvatī, and Oldham[11] considers it was originally a tributary of the Śutudri (Sutlej).

Hillebrandt[12] on the other hand says Sarasvatī in the *Ṛigveda* has three significations:

1. *Name des Flusses in Arachosien.*
2. *Name des Flusses im Madhyadeśa.*
3. *Strom der Manen* = Vaitaraṇī (*in einigen Fällen*).

1 VII. 95. 5. 2 X. 30. 12; VII. 95. 2; 1. 164. 40.
3 Macdonell, VM., p. 87; I. 3. 10, 11; II. 3. 8; VI. 61. 1–4, 7.
4 VI. 61. 3, 13, 12. 5 Macdonell, loc. cit.
6 III. 54. 13; VII. 9. 5; 39. 5; 40. 3. 7 VII. 96. 2.
8 Spiegel, AP., p. 105f; Hopkins, RI., p. 31.
9 Roth, Grassmann, Ludwig, and Zimmer (AIL., p. 10): for Ludwig see Macdonell, VM., pp. 87-8, to which I am indebted for all the references here given.
10 SBE., XXXII, p. 60. 11 JRAS., XXV, pp. 49–76.
12 VM., III, pp. 372–8.

It is probable that the original personification was based on the river in Afghanistan but later, when the personification was slightly advanced, and its terrestrial counterpart was forgotten, Sarasvatī was considered to be a goddess representing a mighty stream.

Later still, since Sarasvatī was, in the *Ṛigveda*, never completely dissociated from a river, the small river in the Madhyadeśa was named after the goddess and was consequently considered sacred.[1] If we accept this, most of the above views would be partially true.

[1] A reverse case is also equally probable. The river may have been first named and then the goddess sometimes identified with it.

CHAPTER XII

# OTHER GODS, DEIFICATIONS AND DEMONS, AND ESCHATOLOGY

## *Dual and group divinities*

OVER sixty hymns of the *Ṛigveda* are devoted to the praise of dual divinities forming a group of some twelve gods as described above. These formations are considered to have been based on the pair Dyāvā Pṛthivī, Heaven and Earth, the pair which to early thought appeared so indissolubly connected in nature, that the myth of their conjugal union is found widely diffused among primitive peoples and has therefore probably come down to the Veda from a period anterior to that immediately preceding the separation of the Indo-European races. Besides Dyāvā Pṛthivī, celebrated in six entire hymns, the most important pairs are, Mitra-Varuṇa, Indra-Varuṇa and Indra-Agni. The names are combined as dual compounds. The characteristic feature of these hymns is, that the epithets and functions more properly belonging to one god are applied equally to the other. For example, although Indra is the chief Vṛtra-slayer and *soma*-drinker, these epithets are applied to Agni as well as Varuṇa when they are associated with Indra. This custom of inviting gods in pairs must have considerably helped to render indistinct the powers and functions of the different gods, as well as advanced the conception which ultimately led to pantheism.

There are again hymns in which more than two gods are invoked.[1] They are not however, in this case, invoked collectively. The different stanzas in the hymn have different deities. These hymns were probably formed out of the remnants of half forgotten hymns. Otherwise it is difficult

[1] I. 22, 23; II. 32, 41; III. 62; VIII. 90 and others, e.g. III. 62, Indra, Varuṇa, Bṛhaspati, Pūṣan, Savitṛ, Soma, Mitra.

to understand why such unsystematic and arbitrary combinations of gods should be formed, although there existed the convenient practice of invoking any gods and any number of them, under the loose title of 'all gods' (*Viśvedevas*).

Some forty hymns of the *Ṛigveda* are addressed to *Viśvedevas*. It appears almost certain that this device was suggested by the necessity of invoking all the gods to the sacrifice.[1] By this means, the naming of every god was easily dispensed with. But the *Viśvedeva*-hymns do not show that the term was always used as comprehensively as its meaning indicates. The all-gods are sometimes conceived as a narrower group, being invoked with other groups, such as the Vasus and Ādityas.[2] The gods are sometimes invoked collectively, no particular name being mentioned: 'O ye all-gods, come hither and listen to this mine invocation. Be seated on this strewn grass. Approach all ye gods to him, who adorns you with oblations full of oil. May the sons of the immortal (or immortality) duly hear our songs and may they show good favour towards us.'[3] In other stanzas only a few definite gods appear to have been addressed. Thus in the same hymn quoted above (VI. 52) we find the words: 'May Indra with the Marut host, with Tvaṣṭṛ, Mitra, Aryaman, accept our laudation and enjoy these offerings of ours;'[4] and in stanza 16, only Agni and Parjanya are invoked.

We have already dealt with such group deities as the Maruts, sometimes called the Rudras and a few times invoked with their father Rudra; and the Ādityas, which in fact form a more or less compact and definite group of independent gods. Besides these we have the Vasus, who in the *Ṛigveda* are specially connected with Indra, but in later literature have Agni as their leader.[5] The Ṛbhus constitute a somewhat independent and an important group, but are really not

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 130. Hopkins, RI., p. 137.

[2] ibid. Cf. II. 3. 4; V. 41. 18.

[3] VI. 52. 7–9; other examples are X. 66. 14, 15; X. 137. 1; X. 65. 13b, 14, 15.

[4] VI. 52. 11.

[5] Macdonell, VM., p. 130.

higher gods. They are 'a number of mythical beings not regarded as having the divine nature fully and originally'.[1] Their most noteworthy characteristic appears to be their skill in fashioning (*takṣ* 'to fashion') various things, such as a car for the Aśvins,[2] the two bay steeds for Indra,[3] an all-stimulating, omniform and nectar-yielding cow for Bṛhaspati,[4] and the two worlds,[5] as well as prayer[6] and sacrifice.[7] They are thus the rivals of Tvaṣṭṛ.

### *Goddesses*

We have already mentioned such goddesses as Pṛthivī, Uṣas, Sarasvatī and Rātrī, and of the remaining Vac is the only one of any importance. She is the personification of speech and is celebrated in one late hymn,[8] where she speaks highly of her own greatness. There is also another hymn,[9] which Max Müller gives as being nominally dedicated to 'knowledge' (*jñānam*), but which Professor Macdonell rightly takes as an invocation of 'sacred speech as that of the Veda and of Brahmins, not that of men in general'.[10] But on the whole the goddesses play an insignificant part, and although we have some goddesses of the sacrifice such as Iḷā and Mahī or Bhāratī, they occupy no prominent place in the sacrifice and have hardly any share in the government of the world.

In addition to Puraṁdhī, we have three other goddesses of plenty, viz. Dhiṣaṇā, Rākā and Sinīvālī; while Araṇyānī is the goddess of the forest. Some of the Vedic gods are supposed to have had wives, but beyond this we have no information about them. The names are formed by adding the feminine suffix *-anī* to the name of the god. Thus, Varuṇa's wife is Varuṇānī, Indra's, Indrāṇī. Agni's wife is called Agnāyī and that of the Aśvins Aśvinī (i.e. Sūryā). The 'wives of the gods' (*devānāṁ patnīḥ*) are also

[1] ibid., p. 131. [2] I. 161, 3, 6; IV. 33, 8. [3] IV. 33. 10.
[4] IV. 33. 8; I. 20. 3; 161. 3, 6. [5] IV. 34. 9. [6] X. 80. 7.
[7] III. 54. 12; see Macdonell, VM., pp. 132–3.
[8] X. 125. [9] X. 71. [10] *Hymns*, p. 91f.

collectively referred to. They have a prominent place in the cult of the Brāhmaṇas apart from the gods.

*Aditi*:—There is however one goddess in the *Ṛigveda*, who although not separately invoked is often incidentally celebrated.[1] It is difficult to class her in any of the divisions into which the Vedic gods are divided, because she neither appears to have originally represented any physical phenomenon, nor was she originally a purely abstract deity. She seems a singular instance of a purely mythological creation,[2] first conceived as the mother of the gods in general but later as the mother of those gods who received the metronymic epithet Āditya. The peculiar characteristic of freeing from sin and bondage may also have been early associated with her name, which appears to have meant 'unbinding' 'bondlessness' (*a-diti* from *di-ti* [*dā* 'to bind'] 'binding'), and it is perhaps because of her name that she became the mother of those gods who possessed this quality of forgiving, e.g. Varuṇa and Mitra.

The motherhood of the gods and the quality of destroying sin and breaking bondage are in fact her two most prominent characteristics. As the name shows, Ādityas in general are her sons (once however, she is said to be their sister[3]), but she is also expressly spoken of as the mother of Mitra and Varuṇa,[4] and of Aryaman[5] and thence probably the mother of kings.[6] Her sons are once spoken of as eight[7] and are said to be excellent and powerful.[8]

There is no doubt that she is younger than many of her sons and as such it is not to be wondered at that some

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 120.

[2] Professor Jastrow makes an important distinction between the 'active pantheon' and the deities introduced more or less arbitrarily or for a definite purpose—the latter having gained no foothold in popular belief (*Religion of Babylonia and Assyria*, p. 188); and Saussaye thinks this distinction useful for Teutonic mythology (*Religion of the Teutons*, 1902, p. 284). Exceptionally, however, the originally arbitrary introductions may gain a foothold in popular belief, and with this noteworthy modification, Aditi may be said to be an instance of the latter class.

[3] VIII. 90. 15. [4] VIII. 25. 3. [5] VIII. 47. 9.
[6] II. 27. 7. [7] X. 72. 8. [8] III. 4. 11, VIII. 56. 11.

epithets, which more particularly belong to her sons, especially Varuṇa and Mitra, are applied to her. Thus, like Mitra and Varuṇa, she is bright, luminous and a supporter of creatures :[1] and just as Varuṇa is the king of all[2], who encompasses the two worlds,[3] so Aditi is extensive, a mistress of wide stalls.[4]

Varuṇa unties his penitent worshipper like a rope, and removes sin.[5] So Aditi also is implored to forgive sin,[6] to loosen the bonds of sin[7] or to release the worshipper like a tied thief.[8] Like the luminous Ādityas, she is also connected with light. Dawn is spoken of as her face, and her light, which is said to be 'imperishable' (*avadhrā*), is asked for. This more or less exhausts her description in the older parts of the *Ṛigveda*.

In the later part of the *Ṛigveda*, owing to the indefinite connotation of her name and the lack of physical basis, she becomes an object of mystical identifications and thus is made into a great cosmic deity.[9] Her motherhood and her being extensive like Pṛthivī had probably already prepared the ground for her identification with the earth, a thing of common occurrence in the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā* and the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*.[10] The gods again are said to have been born from Aditi, the waters and earth.[11] She is however, mentioned with heaven and earth, which indicates that she was also distinguished from them both.[12] Her identification with the sky at X. 63. 3, as held by Professor Macdonell, seems to be doubtful.[13]

The culmination of Aditi's identification with cosmic deities is, however, reached in the following passage, where she is a personification of universal nature; 'Aditi is the sky; Aditi is the atmosphere; Aditi is mother, father and son;

[1] I. 136. 3. [2] II. 27. 10. [3] VII. 61. 4.
[4] VIII. 67. 12. [5] II. 28. 5; V. 85. 7, 8.
[6] II. 27. 14. [7] VII. 93. 7. [8] VIII. 67. 14.
[9] I. 113. 19; VII. 82. 10; IV. 25. 3.
[10] Macdonell, VM., p. 121.
[11] X. 63. 2. [12] Macdonell, VM., p. 10.
[13] op. cit., p. 121.

Aditi is all the gods and the five tribes; Aditi is whatever has been born, Aditi is whatever shall be born.'[1]

*Abstract deities*

There are some deities which are generally known as abstract deities, and these can be divided into three classes.

(1) First, the deities whose names are formed by adding the suffix *tṛ* or *tar* and who, therefore, merely denote agency. As compared with the deities of the other two classes, the conception underlying these deities is much simpler and their abstract character much more elementary. It is much easier to attribute a certain act or function to some superhuman or semi-human power and, designating this power by a name which clearly indicates the performance of that particular function, to form that power into a divinity, than either to separate and exalt to the position of an independent god a name which was originally only an epithet of some other god, or to personify a purely abstract quality. For this reason, the deities denoting agency may have preceded the coming into existence of the other two kinds of abstract deities. The same may be said of the gods whose names end in *pati* and have no connexion with any phenomenon.[2]

Of these gods of agency the following names occur in the *Ṛigveda*, but excepting Tvaṣṭṛ none of them holds a position of any importance: Tvaṣṭṛ, the 'fashioner' or 'artificer'; Dhātṛ, the 'creator'; Vidhātṛ, the 'disposer'; Dhārtṛ, the 'supporter'; Trātṛ, the 'protector'; and Netṛ, the 'leader'.

Although Tvaṣṭṛ is not celebrated in an independent hymn, the name is often mentioned. It occurs about sixty-five times, about thirty times in books II—IX and about thirty-five times in I and X.

Thinking that, like other gods of the *Ṛigveda*, Tvaṣṭṛ also may have originally represented some phenomenon in nature, Kuhn[3] put forward the view that he was the sun, since he was called Savitṛ.[4] With this view Hillebrandt[5] agreed,

[1] I. 89. 10.
[2] cf. Oldenberg, RV., pp. 64–68, 233ff.
[3] *Kuhn's Zeitschrift*, I, p. 448.
[4] III. 55. 19; X. 10. 5.
[5] VM., I, p. 517.

but it appears to have been later abandoned by Kuhn. Hardy[1] also regarded him as a solar deity, and Macdonell[2] does not think it 'unlikely that this, in a period anterior to the *Ṛigveda*, represented the creative aspect of the sun's nature'. Ludwig[3] on the other hand, considers him to be a god of the year, while Oldenberg regarded him as a pure abstraction denoting a particular activity. In our opinion, it is vain to seek for a phenomenon from which the conception of Tvaṣṭṛ was derived. He was from the beginning an imaginary divine power, possessing great artistic skill. His greatest deed was to have fashioned a golden, thousand-pointed, hundred-edged bolt for Indra, and this is often referred to in connexion with him.[4] This making of the most powerful weapon of the most powerful god of the *Ṛigveda* was probably the primary reason of his coming to be regarded as a god. There is nothing in the *Ṛigveda* to prevent the assumption that Tvaṣṭṛ was originally one who formed the bolt for Indra. To extol his wonderful craftsmanship still further, he was made the author of a new cup,[5] which contained the food of the *asuras*[6] or the beverage of the gods:[7] and he was said to sharpen the iron axe of Brahmaṇaspati.[8] He was thus called a skilful worker (*sukṛt*),[9] possessing beautiful and skilful hands.[10] The Vedic poets, not content with making him the forger of inanimate things, made him the generator and nourisher of a great variety of creatures.[11] He also begot Bṛhaspati[12] and produced Agni[13] as well as Indra.[14] He adorned all beings with form[15] and is often himself said to be omniform.[16] He develops the germ in the womb, is the shaper of human and animal forms[17] and presides over generation.[18] Through his daughter

[1] VBP., p. 30f. [2] VM., p. 117. [3] RV., III, pp. 333ff.
[4] I. 32. 2; 52. 7; 85. 9; V. 31. 4; VI. 17. 16; X. 48. 3; etc.
[5] I. 26. 6. [6] I. 110. 3. [7] I. 161. 5; III. 35. 5.
[8] X. 53. 9. [9] III. 54. 12. [10] III. 54. 12; VI. 49. 9.
[11] III. 55. 19. [12] II. 23. 17. [13] I. 95. 2.
[14] Macdonell, VM., p. 57. [15] X. 110. 9.
[16] I. 13. 10; III. 55. 19; X. 10. 5. [17] I. 188. 9; VIII. 91. 8; X. 184. 1.
[18] III. 4. 9. It is noticeable that the root used in describing the fashioning of Indra's bolt by Tvaṣṭṛ is *takṣ*. But *tvakṣ*, which is the root from which

Saraṇyū, who with Vivasvat is the parent of the primeval twins Yama and Yamī, he becomes the ancestor of the human race.[1] It is probably for this reason that he is called the first[2] or the first-born,[3] who knows the region[4] and goes to the place of the gods.[5]

*Soma* is described as 'the mead of Tvaṣṭṛ'.[6] Like other gods Tvaṣṭṛ is also besought to grant wealth to his worshippers, to delight in their hymns[7] and to confer long life.[8] In later mythology he comes to be regarded as one of the Ādityas.

(2) The second class of abstract deities contains names which were originally epithets of other gods. Thus the word *viśvakarman* occurs twice as an attribute, once of Indra[9] and once of the sun,[10] but in the last book two whole hymns are dedicated to Viśvakarman's praise.[11] These hymns, which are doubtless of later origin, describe him as the all-seeing generator of the earth and the sky, who has eyes, arms and a face on every side. He is wise, energetic, the creator (*dhātā*) and the disposer (*vidhātā*). He is also called our father, our generator (*janitā*) and disposer, who knows all places and all worlds, and who alone is the giver of names to the gods. He is again the lord of speech (*vācaspati*), and a priest who offered all the worlds as a sacrifice. He is one who is swift as thought.[12]

The word *prajāpati* also occurs twice as an epithet, but later it becomes the name of the supreme god. Thus Savitṛ is described as the supporter of heaven and *prajāpati* of the world (*divo dhartā bhuvanasya prajāpatiḥ*)[13] and in another place Soma is called *prajāpati* (*pavamānaḥ prajāpatiḥ*).[14] In the four places in which the word occurs in the last book, it

the name Tvaṣṭṛ is derived, is only a rarer form of the same root. This fact may to a certain extent support the above assumption.

1 X. 17. 1. 2. 2 I. 13. 10. 3 IX. 5. 9.
4 X. 70. 9. 5 II. 1. 9. 6 I. 117. 22. 7 VII. 24. 21.
8 X. 18. 6. 9 VIII. 87. 2. 10 X. 170. 4. 11 X. 81. 82.

12 The cosmological and philosophical import of these hymns will be discussed later.

13 IV. 53. 2. 14 IX. 5. 9.

has clearly attained to the position of the name of a god. In two of these, Prajāpati is invoked to grant offspring,[1] while one passage speaks of him as making cows prolific.[2] Lastly he is invoked in the last stanza of the hymn, X. 121: 'O Prajāpati, none but thou is the lord over all these created things; may the desires with which we have invoked thee be fulfilled; may we be lords of riches'.[3]

(3) The third class of abstract deities consists of personifications of abstract qualities. These in our opinion are the only proper abstract deities and they presuppose an advanced stage of thinking It does not appear probable that the creation of these deities had begun much before the end of the Ṛigvedic period. One of the reasons for holding this opinion is that they are found only in the last book of the *Ṛigveda* and even here they do not attain to a position of any great importance. The fact that Aramati, meaning 'devotion' or 'piety', occurs in the *Ṛigveda* as a personified deity, while in the *Avesta* we find Ārmaiti as a genius of earth as well as wisdom, does not guarantee the conclusion that the personification of abstract nouns goes back to the Indo-Iranian period.[4]

Of these Manyu (wrath) is the most important, since he is invoked in two whole hymns.[5] But here he represents the wrath of Indra in particular, rather than the abstract quality of anger. Indeed, he is the personification of Indra's concrete wrath, and not of all wrath in general. Thus he not only receives many of the attributes of Indra, but is actually said to have been Indra. He is the conqueror with whose aid the worshippers hope to conquer the Ārya and the Dāsa. He is the slayer of foes, of Vṛtra and Dasyu; the wielder of thunder, he is girt by Maruts. He is also called the victor, the subduer, the queller of foes and one possessed of perfect splendour. Mightier than the mighty, he is worshipped by

[1] X. 85. 43; 184. 1. [2] X. 169. 4.

[3] ERE., XII, pp. 606b-607a. Professor Macdonell has also treated Bṛhaspati as an abstract deity (ibid.). This view has been criticized above, under Bṛhaspati.

[4] Macdonell, VM., p. 119f. [5] X. 83, 84.

tribes of men and invoked to bring all kinds of riches and distribute enemies' possessions. He is once called the thunderbolt, *vajra*.

With Śraddhā, who is invoked in one short hymn,[1] the case is slightly different. She is in fact a pure deification of the abstract quality of faith. 'By Faith is Agni kindled, by Faith is oblation offered,' by Faith one obtains wealth. 'We invoke Śraddhā in the morning, Śraddhā at mid-day as well as at the setting of the sun. O Śraddhā, may we be full of faith! Guarded by Vāyu, even the gods offering sacrifice worship Śraddhā.'

Other unimportant instances of this class are: Anumati, 'Favour' (of the gods); Nirṛti, 'Decease' or 'Dissolution', a personification which appears to preside over death; Asunīti, 'Spirit-life', invoked to bestow long life, strength and nourishment; and Aramati, 'Devotion' or 'Piety'.

### *Other Deifications*

The Ṛigvedic Indians also had a few deities of the tutelary order, 'guardians watching over the welfare of house or field',[2] like Vāstoṣ-pati, 'Lord of the dwelling', Kṣetrasya-pati, 'Lord of the field', and Sītā, the 'Furrow'.

The poets of the *Ṛigveda* deified not only the things and phenomena of nature, but equally well men, animals and inanimate things. The deification of men, however, was limited to ancient seers and sages, among whom the following names occur: Manu, son of Vivasvat, the institutor of sacrifice; Atharvan, the ancient fire-priest; Dadhyañc, Atri, Kaṇva, Kutsa and Kāvya Uśanā. The Aṅgirases and Bhṛgus, on the other hand, are more frequently referred to in the plural as denoting families or groups of ancient seers. Professor Macdonell's remarks on this point are worth quoting:

Most of these deified ancestors 'seem, . . . to have been either actual men of bygone days or to have been projected into the past to represent the first progenitors of actually living men. The deeds attributed to them are partly historical

[1] X. 151. [2] Macdonell, VR., p. 608[a].

re niniscences, partly ætiological myths, and partly poetical creations. By association with the gods they are often drawn into participation in the mythological actions—such as the winning of the sun—on which the order of nature is founded. Most of what is told about the priestly ancestors is intended to furnish evidence of sacerdotal art and power, which are therefore treated supernaturally. It is not likely that they represent powers of nature and are faded gods come down to earth.'[1]

The deification of the horse as a separate divine being occupies a prominent position in the *Ṛigveda*, and we have as many as four concrete examples of this: viz. Dadhikrā, Tārkṣya, Paidva and Etaśa. Dadhikrā is sometimes called Dadhikrāvan and is invoked in four hymns.[2] All the good qualities of a steed, such as swiftness and lustre, are attributed to him, but he also performs heroic deeds, such as destroying the Dasyus.[3] He is invoked with the Dawn[4] together with the Aśvins and Agni, but he is invoked first.[5] The view of Ludwig, Pischel, von Bradke and Oldenberg, according to which 'Dadhikrā was not a deity, but an actual horse, famous as a racer or charger which received divine honours', is preferable to that of Roth and Grassmann, 'who think that Dadhikrā represents in the form of a steed the circling ball of the sun'.[6] Hymn X. 178 is dedicated to Tārkṣya, and his might and speed are praised. Naighaṇṭuka gives both these names, viz. Dadhikrā and Tārkṣya as synonyms of 'horse'.[7]

Paidva is a mythical steed, so called because the Aśvins were believed to have brought it to Pedu.[8] He is said to be praiseworthy[9] and is called *ahihan*.[10]

In the *Ṛigveda* the word *etaśa* is sometimes used as an adjective, meaning 'swift', and sometimes as a noun,

1 Macdonell, VM., p. 147; Oldenberg expressed the same opinion, RV, pp. 273ff.

2 IV. 38–40; VII. 44.

3 IV. 38. 1–3.

4 IV. 39. 1; 40. 1.

5 VII. 44. 1.

6 Macdonell, VM., p. 149.

7 I. 14.

8 I. 119. 10; VII. 71. 5.

9 X. 39. 10.

10 I. 117. 9; 118. 9.

meaning 'horse'. When used in the plural it denotes the horses of the sun.[1] On the whole he appears to be connected with the sun. 'The swift god Ṛtaśa draws the bright form of the sun;'[2] it is he who brought the wheel of the sun.[3]

Some passages[4] show that 'horse' was considered to be symbolical of the sun and fire, which is more especially the case in later literature.[5]

Although a number of gods (and especially Indra) are often called bulls, in order to describe their powerfulness and impetuosity, and although a bull plays some part in the myth of Mudgala and Mudgalānī,[6] it does not appear as a god, and the case is not much different even with regard to the cow. The cow certainly plays an extraordinarily important part in both the life and mythology of the Ṛigvedic Indians, but direct deification appears wanting. And indeed, there seems to be in the *Ṛigveda* no trace of the worship of animals as such. We certainly have horse-gods, but this does not mean that the worship of any earthly horse was prevalent, but that some horses were considered to be gods simply because they were associated with gods. There is not only nothing unnatural in regarding things or animals which are connected with or belong to superhuman beings as divine, but it is a logical necessity, at any rate at that stage of mental development. If the gods are divine beings, the animals which are associated with or belong to these gods must also be divine. In the Indo-Āryan religion, the worship of animals, like that of idols, is decidedly a later innovation. The horse and the cow may have been regarded with respect, since they were useful and are noble animals, but this respect did not amount to attributing that degree of sacredness which is necessary for worship.[7] Nor is there any trace of serpent-worship in the *Ṛigveda*. Other animals,

[1] VII. 62. 2; X. 37. 3; 49. 7. [2] VII. 66. 14.
[3] I. 121. 13; V. 31. 11. [4] VII. 77. 3; I. 63. 2.
[5] AB., VI. 35; see also *Śat.* V. 1. 4. 5; VII. 5. 2. 18; VS., XI. 12; Macdonell VM., p. 150; Oldenberg, RV., pp. 80f., 77.
[6] X. 102.
[7] 'The cow' is however often called *aghnyā*, 'not to be slain'.

such as the goat, the ass, the monkey, the dog, the boar and the eagle stand in more or less the same position.

They are all of them creatures of poetical fancy, created for the sake of mythology. From the evidence of the *Ṛigveda* it appears that the gods were on the whole anthropomorphic, and excepting the two doubtful names, Aja-ekapād and Ahibudnya, the notion of gods possessing animal or semi-animal forms is absent[1]. This is even true in the case of the deification of inanimate objects, e.g. mountains (*parvata*) as we shall see below.

But although animals do not seem to have been worshipped, there are in the *Ṛigveda* a few tribal names which are derived from the names of animals and plants. We have the Matsyas (fishes), the Ajas (goats) and the Śigrus (horse-radishes):[2] and Kaśyapa (a tortoise)[3] occurs as the name of a seer. The conclusion has naturally been drawn 'that these are possibly the survivals of totemism or the belief in the descent of the human race or of individual tribes or families from animals or plants'. It was, however, seriously questioned by Hopkins,[4] and Professor Keith,[5] after proving that the theory of the existence of totemism is unnecessary to explain the facts of the Soma sacrifice, sums up the whole position as follows:

'....in the Vedic religion totemism has very little to adduce in its support. The use of beast or vegetable names for people is valueless as evidence, since the names may be in some cases mere nicknames, in some derived from the use of a symbol of a terrible or cunning or a useful animal or plant as a badge, to impart the peculiar quality it possesses to the wearer, without implying any blood relation.'

[1] The man-tigers occur in V.S., XXX. 8; *Śat.* XIII. 2. 4. 2. cf. Oldenberg, RV., p. 84f.; Macdonell VM., p. 153. The Nāgas occur in AGS. III. 4. 1. In later Indian literature there are crowds of these deities.

[2] VII. 18. 6, 19. [3] IX. 114. 2.

[4] PAOS., (1894), p. cliv.

[5] TS., p. cxxi. See also, Keith, JRAS. (1907), p. 931f.; (1909), pp. 470, n.1; 588, n.1; cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 153; Oldenberg, RV., p. 85f. and *Vedic Index*, I, pp. 111, 378.

He further adds: 'The late mention of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* (VII. 5. 1. 5) in connexion with Prajāpati's form as a tortoise, that men say that all beings are the children of the tortoise (Kaśyapa, which is identified with Kūrma) is a mere piece of priestly speculation, and gives no trace of a real descent, even if descent alone were valid evidence of totemism. We do not hear that Kāśyapas worshipped tortoises or ate them sacramentally or did anything special with regard to them.'[1]

We have next to deal with deified terrestrial objects. The powers and attributes of personified rivers have already been described. In addition, mountains (*parvata*) are conceived as divine powers and are invoked as manly, firmly fixed, rejoicing in plenty.[2] Parvata again forms a dual divinity with Indra himself (Indrāparvatā)[3] and they who drive in a great car are prayed to come to the offering.[4] Professor Macdonell truly remarks: 'Here Parvata seems to be a mountain god, conceived anthropologically as a companion of Indra.'[5] This opinion seems equally true in the deification of plants (Oṣadhi), large trees (Vanaspati, 'lord of the forest' but more probably 'lord of all vegetation'), forests (Araṇyāni), as well as the sacrificial post, the pressing stones and weapons; and this is clear from what is said of these deities in the *Ṛigveda*. Thus Oṣadhi are called mothers and goddesses;[6] Araṇyānī invoked at X. 146 as an independent jungle goddess, is in her deification in no way dissimilar to other goddesses of the *Ṛigveda*, e.g. Pṛthivī or Uṣas; the sacrificial posts[7] are themselves called gods, and as gods they are said to go to the gods;[8] while the pressing stones (*grāvan* or *adri*[9]) described as immortal, unaging and more mighty even than heaven, are invoked to drive away demons and destruction and to bestow wealth and offspring.[10]

[1] See TS., loc. cit., n. 4, where the author remarks that 'Frazer's former view that the Greek traces of totemism prove it for any Aryan race is no longer cogent'.

[2] III. 54. 20.

[3] I. 122. 3; 132. 6.

[4] III. 53. 1.

[5] Macdonell, VM., p. 154.

[6] X. 97. 4.

[7] III. 8.

[8] III. 8. 6. 9.

[9] X. 76; 94; 175.

[10] Macdonell, VM., p. 154f.; Hillebrandt, VM., I, p. 151.

*Demonology of the Ṛigveda*

The demons of the *Ṛigveda* include the enemies of gods as well as of men. The Paṇis and Vṛtras are for example the enemies of the gods in general, but more particularly of Indra; while the dark aborigines and terrestrial goblins are the enemies of men. Owing, however, to constant invocations of gods to come to their aid and destroy the foes of men, there has come about a curious interchange of terms between the enemies of gods and those of men. Thus the word Dāsa or Dasyu, which properly denoted the human foes of the Vedic Indians, comes to signify aerial demons, the enemies of gods, while the term Vṛtras comes to denote the Dasyus who waged constant war against the Aryan invaders.

*Asuras*:—This class of demons is historically the most important, but in the *Ṛigveda* the word occurs in the sense of a demon only a few times. In the great majority of cases the word is used in the singular and means a great or supreme god. It appears that the change of meaning took place when the period of the *Ṛigveda* was drawing to a close, but how the change came about is almost impossible even to guess. Similar difficulty is experienced in the case of the word *daeva*, which comes to mean a demon in the *Avesta*.

The passages in which the word is used in the singular and means a demon, are where the epithet *asurahan* 'Asura-slayer' is applied to Indra, Agni, and the sun.[1] In four passages,[2] the word is used in the plural and denotes the enemies of gods in general, as is the case throughout the later Vedic literature.

*Paṇis*:—The Paṇis were a group of demons of the upper air, enemies primarily of Indra, but secondarily of Soma, Agni, Bṛhaspati and the Aṅgirases also. The word is oftener found in the plural but sometimes also in the

[1] VI. 22. 4; VII. 13. 1; X. 170. 2.
[2] VIII. 85. 9; X. 53. 4; 151. 3; 157. 4.

singular, as representative of the group. The Paṇis are very intimately connected with cows, which are expressly mentioned or implied in nearly every passage where they occur, and which are spoken of as their wealth or treasure.[1] These cows refer either to the rays of light or streams of water which fall in the shape of rain. Hymn X. 108 is a dialogue between Śaramā, the hound of the gods, or of Indra and the Paṇis.

*Dāsas* or *Dasyus* :—These are primarily the foes of men, but the words are also used to denote the atmospheric demons, as, for example, when they are contrasted with the foes of the gods,[2] or when they are spoken of as cast down by Indra while endeavouring to scale heaven.[3] On the other hand, the epithet *dasyuhan*[4] applied to Indra refers to the aborigines.

Besides the group of demons called Dāsas or Dasyus, there are individual Dāsas who appear as powerful enemies of gods and men. Thus Śuṣṇa, who has horns[5] and strong forts,[6] is the chief enemy of Kutsa. Indra, however, conquers him for the sake of Kutsa.[7] In his conflict with Indra, Śuṣṇa moves in darkness,[8] but Indra shatters his forts and releases the heavenly waters.[9]

*Śambara* :—The Dāsa Śambara is said to have ninety,[10] ninety-nine[11] or a hundred[12] forts, and to dwell in the mountains.[13] Indra discovered him and struck him down from the mountain.[14] Once Bṛhaspati also is said to have cleft the forts of Śambara and then to have entered the mountain full of treasure.[15]

*Pipru* :—The Dāsa Pipru, or the wily Asura Pipru as he is once called,[16] was the enemy of 'Indra's protégé Ṛjiśvan,

1 X. 108; VI. 39. 2; II. 24. 6; IX. 111. 2.
2 III. 29. 9. 3 VIII. 14. 14.
4 I. 100. 12; for more examples cf. Macdonell, VM., p. 157f.
5 I. 33. 12. 6 I. 51. 11. 7 IV. 16. 12, V. 29. 9.
8 V. 32. 4. 9 I. 51. 11; VIII. 40. 10.
10 I. 130. 7. 11 II. 19. 6.
12 II. 14. 6. 13 II. 12. 11. 14 I. 130. 7.
15 II. 24. 2. 16 X. 138. 3.

who offers *soma* to Indra and is aided by him in the conflict'.[1] Indra shattered his forts[2] and conquered him.[3]

*Namuci*:—Indra is also several times said to have slain[4] or struck down[5] the wily Dāsa Namuci.[6] There are several other names of demons found in the *Ṛigveda*, such as Dhuni and Cumuri, Varcin, Dṛbhīka, Rudhikrā, etc.

The earliest Ṛigvedic notion of a conflict between gods and demons appears to have been a kind of a duel between a single god and a single demon. It, however, became usual for Indra to have some other god, or the Maruts, as his companions in this fight. Then, besides the individual demons there were groups of them such as the Paṇis and the Dasyus. These two things probably led to the later view found in the Brāhmaṇas according to which the gods and the demons formed two opposing hosts and fought as such. In the *Ṛigveda* there are about half a dozen individual atmospheric demons against whom Indra, or much less frequently some others, waged war and whom he vanquished.

*Vṛtra*:—Vṛtra, the chief adversary of Indra, is by far the greatest and the most important of them all. The slaying of Vṛtra is the greatest deed of Indra and hence 'Vṛtra-slayer', *vṛtrahan*, becomes his most distinctive epithet. Vṛtra is believed to have the form of a serpent (*ahi*),[7] to be without feet or hands,[8] and his head is said to be pierced by Indra.[9] He has thunder, lightning, hail and mist at his disposal.[10] Like other demons Vṛtra also has ninety-nine fortresses[11] which Indra shatters when he slays him.[12] Vṛtra's chief evil deed is to encompass and prevent the waters from flowing, and it is by slaying Vṛtra, that Indra releases the waters[13] or the rivers[14] that were thus encompassed (*vṛtān*).[15]

Vṛtra has a mother named Dānu and she is compared with a cow.[16] The word Dānava, which is clearly a metronymic

1 Macdonell, VM., p. 161. 2 IV. 16. 13.
3 IV. 16. 13; VI. 20. 7. 4 VII. 19. 5. 5 I. 53. 7
6 V. 30; 7. 8; I. 53. 7. 7 VIII. 82. 2. 8 I. 32. 7.
9 I. 52. 10. 10 I. 80. 12; 32. 13. 11 VII. 19. 5. 12 X. 89. 7.
13 VII. 34. 3. 14 VIII. 85. 18. 15 IV. 42. 7. 16 I. 32. 9.

form from Dānu, therefore refers to Vṛtra.[1] In later mythology, however, it comes to denote a demon in general. Thus we often find the *Devas* fighting against the *Dānavas*.

As remarked above, the word Vṛtra sometimes denotes the terrestrial foes, just as the word Dāsas or Dasyus is used in the sense of aerial demons. Illustrations of the former are found in passages where Āryas and Dāsas are distinguished as two kinds of Vṛtras.[2] Illustrations of the latter have already been given.

*Vala*:—Vala is said to be the protector of cows (*rakṣitāraṁ dughānām*) and to possess castles which were forced open by Indra. In hymn X. 68, which is dedicated to Bṛhaspati, Vala is referred to as many as four times. Bṛhaspati is said to have cleft through the weapon of Vala with fiery lightning and to have gathered the cows of Vala as wind gathers the clouds. For these cows taken by Bṛhaspati Vala mourned, as trees whose foliage is robbed by winter.[3] In certain passages the word appears to mean a 'cave'. For example, when Indra is said to have driven out the cows, and opened the *vala*,[4] or the aperture of the *vala* containing cows.[5] Indra is once called *valaṁruja* the 'breaker of Vala',[6] in the *Ṛigveda*, while in the post-Vedic literature the epithet *valabhid* is frequently applied to him.[7]

Other demon foes of Indra are: Arbuda, described as a wily beast,[8] who was cast down or trod down with his foot or pierced with ice by Indra;[9] Viśva-rūpa, a three-headed demon, son of Tvaṣṭṛ, who was slain by Indra and Trita together;[10] Svarbhānu the 'demoniac being' (*āsura*) who is said to have eclipsed the sun with darkness;[11] and Uraṇa, a demon of ninety-nine arms who was slain by Indra.[12]

Lastly, we have the evil spirits which surround the everyday life of man. They are as a whole unconnected with the

[1] e.g. V. 29. 4; II. 11. 10.
[2] Macdonell, VM., p. 159; VI. 22. 10; 33. 3.
[3] X. 68. 6; 5. 10.
[4] II. 14. 3.
[5] I. 11. 5.
[6] III. 45. 2.
[7] Macdonell, VM., p. 160.
[8] VIII. 3. 19.
[9] II. 14. 4, I. 51. 6; VIII. 32. 2.
[10] X. 8. 8. 9.
[11] V. 40. 5. 9.
[12] II. 14. 4.

phenomena or forces of nature, seeming partly at least to be derived from the spirit of dead enemies.[1]

*Rakṣases*:—The Rakṣases are terrestrial goblins which haunt places and torment mankind. They are very frequently referred to, and gods are invoked to destroy them. Like ghosts they were creatures of darkness,[2] and since Agni was the only effective dispeller of darkness at night, he was regarded as a protector from the Rakṣases[3] and was given the characteristic epithet of Rakṣohan, the 'slayer of Rakṣases'. Agni is often invoked to burn the evil spirits. But this is only a poetic way of saying that Agni is the enemy of the Rakṣases and destroys them.

In two hymns (VII. 104; 10. 87) we find another term used, Yātu and Yātudhāna. Sometimes it appears to be coextensive in meaning with the word *rakṣas*. It is also probable that here *rakṣas* expresses the genus and *yātu* the species,[4] but in later Sanskrit literature *rakṣas* denotes evil spirits in general. The word *yātudhāna* could not have had any connexion with magic. We do find words like *yātumat*, *yātumāvat*, but here *yātu* probably meant nothing more than 'evil power'. *Yātu* indeed comes to mean 'a magician' or 'sorcerer' in the *Avesta*, and we have the word *jādū* 'magic' in Indian vernaculars, but this was not in our opinion the original meaning of the word. Originally it meant the opposite of *māyā*,[5] the wondrous, mysteriously great power possessed by a god, and—since the gods were always regarded as benevolent—used for good purposes. Yātu on the other hand was the power possessed by demons or evil spirits for troubling mankind. The change of meaning from 'evil power' to 'magic' does not appear to be improbable.

These demons are believed to be capable of assuming the shapes of human beings or of animals. They eat the flesh

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 164. [2] *Patayanti naktabhiḥ*, VII. 104. 18.

[3] But other gods like Soma and Indra are also invoked to destroy them. See, e.g. VII. 104.

[4] Macdonell, VM., p. 163.

[5] cf. e.g. *Indra jahi ... Yātudhānam ... māyayā ...* VII. 104. 24. See also, Oldenberg, RV., pp. 262ff. and especially p. 263, n.1.

of men and horses, drink up the milk of cows and destroy offspring. They also enter into the worshipper and Agni is prayed to prevent them from doing this. They are particularly inimical towards sacrifice. They throw the offering into confusion [1] and are haters of sacrifice.[2] Agni is besought to consume them and thus protect the sacrifice from curse.[3]

*Piśācas*:—These constitute an important class of terrestrial fiends in later literature, but in the *Ṛigveda* the name occurs only once.[4] Here Indra is invoked to crush the yellow-peaked (*piśaṅgabhṛṣṭim*), watery (*ambhṛṇam*) Piśāci and to strike down every Rakṣas.[5]

There are in addition two other groups of demons which are much less prominent. The Arātis are the demons of 'illiberality' (*a-rāti*) and the Druhs are the 'injurious' demons. The latter group goes back to the Indo-Iranian period.

[1] VII. 104. 28. [2] X. 182. 3. [3] I. 76. 3.
[4] Macdoṛell, VM., p. 164. [5] I. 133. 5.

## CHAPTER XIII

# VEDIC GODS GENERALLY: COSMOGONY AND PHILOSOPHY

### 1. *The Vedic Gods generally*

THE above description of the gods of the *Ṛigveda* shows that they are, like the gods of the preceding periods, simple deifications of the natural phenomena, and on the whole the degree of anthropomorphism to which they have attained is incipient and their physical bases in most cases apparent. The powers and functions attributed to them are merely a poetical representation of the activities and manifestations of the physical phenomena for which they stand. Thus Professor Bloomfield[1] correctly observed, that 'many of the gods of the Veda are scarcely more than half persons, their other half being an active force of nature'.

The older conception with regard to the origin of gods appears to be that they were the children of Heaven and Earth, but in general the ideas concerning the origin or birth of gods are lacking in consistency and definiteness. Thus, Uṣas, the 'Dawn', is also called the mother of the gods '*devānāṁ mātā*',[2] and Aditi and Dakṣa appear to have been regarded as universal parents in two passages.[3] Brahmaṇaspati again is the father of the gods, '*devānāṁ pitaram*'[4]; while Soma, the skilful generator of the gods,[5] is expressly mentioned to have produced Agni, Sūrya, Indra and Viṣṇu, as well as Heaven and Earth.[6] The relationship of a father and son between the different gods is also frequently established, while many gods are believed to have been produced by gods in general.[7]

[1] RV., p. 89.

[2] I. 113. 19; while she is herself called the daughter of heaven, *duhitar divaḥ*, I. 30. 22.

[3] X. 72. 4, 5; 5. 7; Macdonell, VM., p. 46.

[4] II. 26. 3.

[5] IX. 87. 2.

[6] IX. 96. 5.

[7] e.g. Parjanya is said to be the father of Soma (IX. 82. 3); Maruts,

In the *Ṛigveda*, the gods are often called immortal (*amṛtāḥ*),[1] but passages, such as 'the gods drank *soma* for immortality',[2] 'Soma confers immortality on the gods',[3] show that they were probably not always regarded to be so. They are also said to have received immortality as a gift from Agni[4] or Savitṛ,[5] or attained it themselves by some means.[6] The fact that almost every god is said to be born in some way or the other, and born of or generated by some god or gods, probably indicates that, originally at any rate, the gods were not regarded as being without beginning or self-existent.[7] Max Müller[8] remarks, that 'passages in which the birth of certain gods is mentioned have a physical meaning: they refer to the birth of the day, the rising of the sun, the return of the year'; but it is impossible to make this explanation applicable everywhere; for example, when Soma is said to have generated Heaven and Earth. The truth rather appears to be, that the early Ṛigvedic poets had no clear and definite notion on the matter.

Once the gods are spoken of as great and small, young and old,[9] and the phrase *purve devāḥ* (former gods) occurs a few times.[10] This seems to indicate that all the gods were not conceived as having come into existence at the same time and that different generations of the gods were believed in.[11] In one passage however we read:

*na hi vo asti arbhako devāso na kumārakaḥ/viśve sato-mahāntaḥ it*

'Amongst you, O gods, there is none who is small or young. You are all (equally) great.'[12]

usually the sons of Rudra, are also said to have been begotten by Agni (I. 71. 8).

[1] e.g. III. 4. 11; VII. 17. 4. [2] IX. 106. 8.
[3] I. 91. 6; IX. 108. 3. [4] VI. 7. 4; Muir, V, p. 13f.
[5] IV. 54. 2. [6] *Yena devāso amṛtam anāsuḥ*, X. 53. 10.
[7] Even the late cosmogonic hymns where the origin of the gods is chiefly connected with water, describe them as born after the creation of the universe. X. 190; Macdonell, VR., p. 602b.
[8] *Chips*, I, p. 38. [9] I. 27. 13. [10] X. 109. 4; VII. 21. 7.
[11] cf. Muir, V, pp. 12, 16f. [12] VIII. 30. 1.

The character and powers of these gods, as we have seen, vary considerably, but they are almost exclusively benevolent.[1] They receive the praises and worship from their worshippers, while they rule the world and control the phenomena of nature. When they are lauded in well-fashioned hymns or when sacrifices are offered to them, they shower blessings upon those who offer them. They can grant all manner of material prosperity, plenty of cows and many strong sons; they can avert sickness and disease that infest mankind, and thus prolong their lives to a 'hundred autumns'. They govern the whole world, regulate the order of nature and spy over bad and good deeds of mortals. The order set by them no one, however skilful and wise, can violate,[2] not even gods themselves. They drive through the heaven in bright, swift cars and come to seat themselves on the grass spread by the sacrificial altar. Their dwelling place is the highest heaven, the third step of Viṣṇu, and there they dwell —on the whole—amicably[3] and in bliss. They drink *soma* and eat the same food as men. One who offers libations and sacrifices always gains their favour, while those who are sluggish and do not sacrifice are hated by them and perish. They are also moral and are described as 'true' and 'not deceitful',[4] but it is rather their power and brilliance that dominate and not their moral character. They protect the honest and righteous, reward the liberal and meritorious, but punish the sinful. Nothing can harm those whom they befriend. They utterly destroy the enemies of their worshippers, upon whom they confer the belongings of their enemies. All the gods are endowed with beauty, brilliance and power.

The word pantheon in its literal Greek sense cannot be used to denote the gods of the *Ṛigveda*. For not only do they have no acknowledged head, but each one of the

[1] Rudra is the only god who manifests maleficent traits.

[2] III. 56. 1.

[3] Oldenberg, RV., pp. 92-3. The relations between the different gods may not, however, have been always friendly; see Muir, V, p. 18.

[4] Macdonell, VM., p. 18. *Vāl.* 9. 2: *devāstraya ekadaśāsaḥ satyāḥ.*

gods is on the whole regarded as quite independent and not in any way subordinate or inferior to any other god.[1] But nor are these gods henotheistic or kathenotheistic in character, as Max Müller had suggested. According to him Henotheism or Kathenotheism, i.e. 'the belief in individual gods alternately regarded as the highest', is a stage of development previous to polytheism, and is an important feature, not only in the religion of the Veda, where it is much more prominent than anywhere else, but in the development of all religious thought.[2] The Vedic poets are, indeed, in the habit of attributing the highest traits of divinity to a god they happen to be invoking, but this is now almost unanimously regarded as being due to a tendency to exaggerate while praising, and does not constitute a distinct type of religious thought.[3]

The main purpose of the hymns was to please the god invoked by praising his power and greatness, and in doing this it is but natural that the Vedic poets should endeavour to flatter the god as much as they could, by showering upon him every epithet and attribute of which they knew and which their vocabulary permitted, without any regard to propriety or consistency, in order that they might win the best rewards. Thus treated, every god became mighty, benevolent, full of lustre and wisdom; every god propped asunder heaven and earth and held them apart; every god discovered the sun, established him in the sky or made a pathway for him; every god let loose the waters; every god protected his worshippers from his enemies and granted unlimited wealth. But when every god became equally great and was described by more or less the same attributes, individual gods failed to have any distinctive characteristics of their own except their physical substratum; and even

[1] cf. Bloomfield, RV., p. 88f; there are certain passages to the contrary, e.g. I. 101. 3; 156. 4; II. 38. 9; but these are rare and occasional, and do not prove a system of superior and inferior gods.

[2] Müller, PR., p. 180.

[3] Oldenberg, RV., p. 101, n. 1; Macdonell, VM., p. 16; and VR.

that was not always clear. Thus identifications became common,[1] and all the gods came to be placed more or less on the same level. This was again greatly helped by the practice of invoking the gods in pairs, as well as by the practice of invoking all the gods collectively.[2] The former practice brought the two deities invoked more closely together than they ever were, and the latter established the principle that all the gods were equally important for invocation and sacrifice. This stage appears to have been reached in the Ṛigvedic period quite early, and once it was reached it could never have led to anything else but Pantheism. When every god is considered to be as great as any other, it is but natural that any one of them should be taken to represent all or to regard all as but different manifestations of one. Thus, from *nahi vo asti arbhako devāso na kumārakaḥ/viśve satomahāntaḥ it*[3] (amongst you, O gods, there is none who is small or young. You are all [equally] great), to *Indraṁ Mitraṁ Varuṇam Agnim āhuratho divyaḥ sa suparṇo garutmān/Ekaṁ sadviprā bahudhā vadantyagniṁ Yamaṁ Mātariśvānamāhuḥ*[4] (They call him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni, who is the divine winged Garutman [the Sun]. That which is but one the sages call variously: they call him Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan), was but a natural transition. This idea that the various gods are but different forms of the same divine being, however, never undermined the influence or importance of the individual gods and consequently they never merged into one god, so as to develop a monotheistic belief. More or less equal importance and independent sovereignty of each god was, indeed, one of the most fundamental ideas of the *Ṛigveda* from a very early period. Some gods are said to be the greatest of the great or the mightiest of the

[1] e.g. V. 3. 1, 2.

[2] It is indeed impossible to conceive that, had the gods been from the beginning and at all times regarded as of unequal importance, they could have either been invoked as dual divinities or all invoked under the common title of the *Viśvedevas*; cf. VIII. 29, and Dr. Griswold's criticism of it in his RV., p. 342f.

[3] VIII. 30. 1. [4] I. 164. 46.

mighty or worthy of being worshipped by sages, past and present; but comparisons between the powers or praise- and worship-worthiness of any two definite gods are very rare from the beginning. Comparisons on any scale naturally give rise to some sort of favouritism, and from favouritism to fanatical sectarianism is but a question of time. This is well illustrated by the history of later Hinduism itself, viz. the two rival sects which worship Viṣṇu and Śiva; but in the *Ṛigveda* consistent and well sustained favouritism is almost entirely absent.[1]

Thus calling a certain god the greatest or invoking him oftener than any other god or gods, did not, in the mind of the Vedic poets, involve any attribution of inferiority or any slight to the other god or gods, and should not be interpreted as such. This characteristic of favouring one god unduly and at the cost of another, saved the gods from being regarded as subordinate to either Varuṇa or Indra or even to Prajāpati, who was the mythical father of all creation. The fact also that this Prajāpati never became an object of any extensive worship, while his children continued to be worshipped with an undiminished, although much less intense fervour, may be taken as a further illustration of the same characteristic.

This explanation again makes it needless to suppose that a certain deity was replaced or ousted by any other; e.g. Dyaus by Varuṇa, and Varuṇa by Indra. The Indo-Iranians probably, but the Vedic poets certainly, never knew any such thing as replacing one god by another. Varuṇa and Indra are in the *Ṛigveda* indeed invoked much oftener than Dyaus, but this does not mean that Dyaus was given up as inferior or useless. It appears to us that invoking this or that god in many more hymns than any other was never considered by the Vedic poets to affect or alter the position of the other god or gods in any way whatsoever.[2] Unconscious neglect must be distinguished from deliberate rejection. Moreover, for any replacement as alleged, there must be some similarity in their chief functions, otherwise

[1] I. 164. 46. [2] Oldenberg, RV., p. 97, n. 2.

there can be no rivalry and therefore no ousting of one by the other. Now, if the chief function of Dyaus was his fatherhood, that of Varuṇa moral government of the world, and that of Indra giving victory in battle, it becomes clear that any replacement or ousting is altogether out of the question. The fact that all are called Asura is immaterial, because that attribute does not indicate or signify any definite function or quality.[1]

In our opinion, monotheism, truly so called, has had no great chance at any time in the history of early Indian religion. The naturalistic and chaotic polytheism of the Indo-Iranian period was followed by the pantheistic polytheism of the *Ṛigveda*, as Hopkins fitly terms it, to be succeeded in its turn by pantheism pure and simple. Oldenberg says the same thing rather differently: '*Das Denken des Zeitalters, mit dem wir uns hier beschäftigen, hat eben die Idee eines höchsten Weltregierers nur oberflächlich gestreift; ihre volle Tiefe zu erfassen ist dem indischen Geist nicht gegeben gewesen.*'[2]

In the case of Varuṇa we have indeed the nearest approach towards monotheistic belief that the Vedic poets were capable of, but it was still a mere unconscious tendency and nothing more.[3] Seeking philosophically the origin of the world, the Vedic poets of the time when the Ṛigvedic period had already drawn to a close, were led to the conclusion of there being the One, unborn, unaging, existing before time and beyond space. But this again always remained a philosophical theory, and however much it may have influenced religious belief in India, the One, Unborn, Unaging, was never actively worshipped under any name. Thus, even here, Indian religion remained as far from monotheism as ever.[4]

1 See Roth, ZDMG., VI, p. 73f.; SBE., XII, pp. xvi f, and 47, n. 3.

2 RV., p. 97; see also Lehmann, 'Die Inder' in Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Religionsgeschichte*, 3rd ed., 2 vol., Tübingen, 1905, II, p. 13.

3 cf. Griswold, RV., pp. 347ff.

4 cf. Ragozin, VI, pp. 426–9; see also, Bourquin, A., *Le Panthéisme dans les Vedas*, Paris, 1885, especially pp. 21ff.; Jacobi, 'Brahmanism', in ERE., II, pp. 800–804.

We consider the above to be a sufficient justification for our view and therefore refrain from entering upon any more detailed examination of the question. But before leaving this subject we must briefly refer to the opinion of Professor Rādhākrisnan.[1] This scholar in his recent work puts forward the view that the Vedic poets were led to monotheism, since, he remarks, 'monotheism is inevitable with any true conception of God' and since 'the supreme can only be one'. He finds this One supreme god in Prajāpati, also called Viśvakarman or Hiraṇyagarbha. It is however difficult to agree with this. In our opinion, the conception or conceptions underlying the names Prajāpati, Viśvakarman or Hiraṇyagarbha were the gropings of the Vedic poets for a philosophical principle, which became the Absolute (Brahman) of later Indian philosophy and was not a belief which can be called monotheism. As a matter of fact, this conception has hardly assumed any definite shape in the *Ṛigveda*, even without distinguishing between the older and the newer portions of that book. In the Brāhmaṇas as well as the later Saṁhitās he indeed appears very prominently. He is the creator of everything that exists, and is said to be the first born; etc.[2] He is, under the name of Skamba, even called the Supreme Lord Divine.[3] But in spite of all this, he does not appear to have been regarded as *the only God*. The very fact that he is regarded as the creator of other gods shows that he was only one of the gods. He may have been believed to be greater than all the others, but the existence of others is never denied, expressly or even by implication, and as long as other gods are allowed to exist, no true monotheism is, in our opinion, possible.

The prominent place which Prajāpati occupies in the later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas appears in a great measure to be due to two reasons. Firstly, because he was identified with sacrifice, and secondly, because he came to be identified

[1] *Indian Philosophy*, pp. 90ff.: the author also speaks of a 'monotheistic period' (p. 93); see also Griswold, RV., pp. 347–50.

[2] For full description see next part. [3] AV.

with the Brahman (n.). Thus he obtained a place in the ritual and ritualistic expositions, as well as philosophical discourses.[1] But these very reasons at the same time prevented him from becoming the one and the only God, if at all there was any possibility of that. He could not become a supreme god in ritual, because the sacrifices were always offered to many gods jointly and never to Prajāpati alone. Neither could he have any place in philosophy, which was always tending to become monistic. Because although he was identified with the Brahman (n.), his name always showed him to be a divine creator and lord, while what Indian philosophy was clearly tending towards was an impersonal Absolute.

### 2. *Cosmogony and Philosophy of the Ṛigveda*

In the *Ṛigveda* we find more than one view of the origin of the universe. The oldest, however, appears to be one according to which the world was regarded as built like a house, and this metaphor was applied in all its details. The first step in the building of a house is the measuring of the site. Corresponding to this we have the following passages:

'Varuṇa, standing in the region of the air, measureth out the earth with the sun as with a measuring-rod.'[2]

'Indra measured the six regions, made the wide expanse of earth and high dome of heaven.'[3]

'Viṣṇu measured out the terrestrial spaces and made fast the abode on high.'[4]

The act of spreading out the earth, which is often referred to, and attributed to many gods, e.g. Agni, Indra, the Maruts, etc., seems to be closely connected with the act of measuring.

The next step in the building of a house was obtaining timber from the forest, since the houses in that period were built of wood. The Vedic poet, however, was at a loss to say definitely what was the timber used by the gods in the building

[1] The unambiguous meaning of his name again made him a good mythological figure, especially as a creator.

[2] V. 85. 5. [3] VI. 47. 3, 4. [4] I. 154. 1.

of the world. He thus contents himself with asking the question, which he leaves unanswered: 'What was the wood, what the tree out of which they fashioned heaven and earth?'[1] It is in the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa* that this query is answered: *Brahma vanam Brahma sa vṛkṣa āsid/yato dyāvā-pṛthivi nistatakṣuḥ* ('Brahma was the forest, Brahma was that tree from which they fashioned heaven and earth').[2]

The doors of the cosmic house are said to be broad as earth, extending wide, and many in number.[3] Sometimes they are described as the portals of the east through which the morning light enters into the world: 'The dawn shone with brilliance, and opened for us the doors.'[4]

The sky,[5] or the region of air,[6] is supposed to constitute the roof and it is considered to be both supported with posts as well as beamless. 'Indra spread out the broad earth and supported (*stabh* or *skabh*)[7] the sky, erect and mighty';[8] while in another place we have the words: 'He was a clever workman in the world who produced this heaven and earth, and fixed the regions of air in the beamless space.'[9] The following passage appears to have been meant to express the conviction of the security of the cosmic house: 'Savitṛ made fast the earth with bands, Viṣṇu fixed it with pegs, while Bṛhaspati supports its ends firmly.'[10]

In one of the latest hymns of the *Ṛigveda* we have a purely mythological account of how the universe came into existence. The hymn[11] may be summarized as follows:

'In the beginning there was Puruṣa and Puruṣa alone, because as yet he was all that existed.[12] Thousand-headed, thousand-eyed, thousand-footed, ten-finger-breadths [of Puruṣa's body] remained over, even after he had enveloped the earth from every side or had filled it completely. Such

[1] X. 31. 7=X. 81. 4. [2] II. 8. 9. 5. [3] I. 188. 5.
[4] I. 113. 4; IV. 51. 2; V. 45. 1. [5] VI. 17. 7. [6] V. 85. 2; I. 56. 5.
[7] *Viṣkambhāyat*, V. 29. 4. [8] VI. 17. 7.
[9] *Avaṁśa*, IV. 56. 3; II. 15. 2; *askambhana*, X. 149. 1.
[10] X. 149. 1; VII. 99. 3; IV. 50. 1. [11] X. 90.
[12] *Puruṣaṁ yavedaṁ sarvaṁ yadbhūtam*, X. 90. 2.

is his greatness. From him Virāj was born; and from Virāj the primeval Man (*adhi pūruṣaḥ*). When the gods prepared the sacrifice with Puruṣa as the offering, the spring was the sacrificial butter, summer the fuel and autumn the oblation. The gods, the Sādhyas and Ṛiṣis performed the sacrifice with that first-born Puruṣa. The dripping fat of that sacrifice formed the beasts of the air, and of the forest, and of the village. From that general sacrifice were the Ṛics, the Sāmans, as well as metres and the Yajus born. From it the horses, kine, goats and sheep [and indeed] all creatures with two rows of teeth, were produced. The Brahman stood in his mouth, out of the arms was Rājanya formed; from his thighs came what is known as the Vaiśya, and the Śūdra was born from the feet. The moon was born from his mind, the sun from his eyes; Indra and Agni from his mouth, and Vāyu was born from his breath. From his navel came the air; from his head arose the sky, from his feet the earth, from his ear the regions; in this way they formed the worlds.' Although this hymn is undoubtedly one of the latest hymns of the *Ṛigveda*, the idea of accounting for the formation of the world from the body of a giant is supposed to be very primitive.[1]

Professors Macdonell[2] and Wallis,[3] from various passages in the *Ṛigveda*, think that 'in the cosmological speculation of the *Ṛigveda* the sun was regarded as an important agent of generation'.[4] The sun is glorified in X. 121 as the 'golden embryo' (*hiraṇya-garbha*) and in the last stanza of the same hymn he is called the Prajāpati. It is noteworthy that the epithet *prajāpati* was applied to the sun[5] under the name of Savitṛ, and he is described as the ruler[6] and the soul[7] of all that moves and stands. These passages and 'statements such as that in which he is called by many names though one'[8] are taken by the above named writers 'to indicate that

[1] Macdonell, VM., p. 12f.
[2] op. cit., p. 13.
[3] Wallis, CRV., ch. ii.
[4] Macdonell, ibid.
[5] IV. 53. 2.
[6] IV. 53. 6.
[7] I. 115. 1.
[8] I. 164. 46; X. 114. 5; cf. *Vāl.* I. 2.

his (the sun's) nature was being tentatively abstracted to that of a supreme god, nearly approaching that of the later conception of Brahma'.[1]

According to the hymn X. 121, Hiraṇyagarbha[2] arose in the beginning. He was the one lord of creatures, two-footed and four-footed. He who is the giver of breath, the giver of strength, whose command all the gods revere, whose shadow confers immortality as well as death, by his might became the sole king of the breathing and winking world. The one god above all the gods, he through his greatness generated sacrifice. He was also the generator of the earth, the measurer of aerial space; of truthful ordinances he produced the heaven and the great and brilliant waters. When the great waters pervaded the universe, bearing an embryo and generating fire, there arose the one spirit (*asu*) of the gods.[3] All the stanzas, excepting the last, of this hymn end with the words: 'To which (*kasmai* = lit. to whom) god shall we our oblation offer?' The first half of the concluding stanza reads: 'Prajāpati, no other than thou is lord over all these created things.' This is probably meant as an answer to the refrain of the hymn. At any rate the Indians of a later period not only definitely took this view, but interpreting *kasmai* as the dative of *ka*, identified Ka with Prajāpati.[4]

On the other hand the cosmogonic hymn X. 72 states that the world was produced first, then the gods, and that the sun was produced last. Here Brahmaṇaspati is said to have forged this world like a smith. In the first and the earliest age of the gods, the existent sprang from the non-

[1] Macdonell, ibid.

[2] =VS., XIII. 4. Mahīdhara explains this passage as follows: Prajāpati, Hiraṇyagarbha, existing in Brahma's golden egg in the form of a golden Puruṣa, as an embryo sprang into being before all living creatures. He himself assumed a body before the production of all living creatures; see Muir, IV, p. 15, n. 41, and TB., III. 12. 9. 7.

[3] The same idea is also expressed at X. 82. 6: 'The waters contained that earliest embryo in which all the gods were found' (*yatra devāḥ samapaśyanta viśve*):—X. 82. 5.

[4] See comm. on *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, XIII. 4; *Śat.*, VII. 4. 1. 19.

existent. Thereafter, the earth sprang from Uttānapāda, the regions from the earth, Dakṣa from Aditi and Aditi from Dakṣa, and after Aditi were born the gods. The gods then disclosed the sun which had been hidden in the ocean.[1]

We have already remarked that the mechanical production of the universe may have been the earliest guess to account for the origin of the world. Just as the gods were modelled on human personality, so were the cosmic actions of the gods supposed to be only 'magnified copies of human actions'.[2] So far as this view is concerned, the Ṛigvedic poets do not attempt to discover the motive with which the gods created the world. They were probably content with the thought that a building of a house was as natural to a god as it was to a man.

The hymns which more or less wholly deal with cosmogony, are undoubtedly late and do not belong to the Ṛigvedic period proper. They display an advanced stage of thinking in the abstract, and this stage was not reached till the end of the period of the *Ṛigveda* and the beginning of the period of later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas. The myth that the human race was produced from the body of a giant may be very old, but the form in which we find it in the *Puruṣa-sūkta* shows clearly that it was the product of an age when sacrifice was being considered very important and when the priests were busy finding divine sanctions for the perpetuation of the cult of the sacrifice, the theory being that sacrifices must be performed to sustain the world as well as the gods, because it was from sacrifice that both the world and the gods were produced.[3]

[1] cf. also X. 149. 2, 3. [2] Wallis, CRV., p. 27.

[3] The *Puruṣa-Sūkta* 'was evidently produced at a period when the ceremonial of sacrifice had become largely developed, when great virtue was supposed to reside in its proper celebration, and when a mystical meaning had come to be attached to the various materials and instruments of the ritual as well as to the different members of the victim. Penetrated with the sanctity and efficacy of the rite, and familiar with all its details, the priestly poet, to whom we owe the hymn, has thought it no profanity to represent the supreme Puruṣa himself as forming the victim, whose immolation, by the agency of the gods, gave birth, by its transcendent power, to

We have still, however, the hymn X. 129 to consider. This hymn like other hymns above referred to has the origin of the world as its subject, but unlike them it is not mythological but highly philosophical. In X. 72. 2 we have the words:

*Brahmaṇaspatiretā saṁ karmāraḥ ivādhamat |*
*Devānām pūrve yuge asataḥ sad ajāyata ||*[1]

While the hymn X. 129 begins as follows:

*Na asad āsīd no sad āsīt tadānīm*
*Na asīd rajo no vyoma paro yat |*
*Kim āvarīvaḥ kuha kasya śarman*
*Ambhaḥ kim āsīd gahanaṁ gabhīram ||*
*Na mṛtyur āsīd amritaṁ na tarhi*
*Na rātryaḥ ahnaḥ āsīt praketaḥ |*

'Non-being then existed not, nor being:
There was no air, nor heaven which is beyond it.
What motion was there? where? by whom directed?
Was water there, and fathomless abysses?
Death then existed not, nor life immortal;
Of neither night nor day was any semblance.'

The poet then offers a definite solution of the problem, 'What was the origin of the Universe?'

'The One breathed calm and windless by self-impulse,
There was not any other thing beyond it.
Darkness at first was covered up by darkness;
The universe was indistinct and fluid.
The empty space that by the void was hidden,
That One was by the force of heat (*tapaṣaḥ*) engendered.
Desire (*kāma*) then at the first arose within it,
Desire, which was the earliest seed of spirit.
(*manaso retaḥ prathamaṁ yad āsīt.*)
The bond of being in non-being, sages
Discovered searching in their hearts with wisdom.'

the visible universe and all its inhabitants.'—Muir, V, p. 373. See also the passages quoted by Muir in I, pp. 13ff.

[1] cf. AV., XVII. 1. 19.

But of the correctness of this solution the poet himself is by no means certain. However daring, it is merely a philosophical speculation, and happily the poet does not claim to have perceived the ultimate principle. Its rationalistic spirit, expressed in the last two stanzas, is indeed the most charming feature of the hymn.

'Who knows it truly? who can here declare it?
Whence was it born? whence issued this creation?
And did the gods appear with its production?
But then who knows whence it has arisen?
This world-creation, whence it has arisen,
Or whether it has been produced or has not,
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
He only knows or even he does not know it.'

(*yo 'syādhyakṣaḥ parame vyoman so 'ṅga veda yadi vā na veda.*)

The aggregate of these cosmogonical hymns forms the taproot of later Indian cosmogony and philosophy, and the hymn we have just mentioned is of the greatest possible importance. We repeatedly hear of how Prajāpati generated the world, how the universe is the product of the sacrifice of Puruṣa performed by gods, how the worlds as well as the gods were born from the golden egg, which was itself produced out of primeval waters. But the discussions on the philosophical question: 'What was in the beginning?', are much more prominent in the Upaniṣads and are imposingly dealt with. If the religious thought of the *Ṛigveda* led to pantheistic polytheism, its philosophical thought led to monism, as surely and as inevitably. Of the latter, hymn X. 129 is perhaps the earliest specimen.

### 3. *Worship of Vedic Gods*

Just as all worship is divisible into two parts, viz. worship by words and worship by acts, so the worship of the gods of the *Ṛigveda* can be divided into two parts, viz. prayer and sacrifice.

(*a*) *Prayer.* The Ṛigvedic prayer can be divided into two parts, non-ritualistic and ritualistic. This division is not only possible but important, since it further makes it considerably easier to understand and appreciate both the religion and the poetry of the *Ṛigveda*. We have not found this distinction in the works of any other author and thus some remarks in justification of it may be necessary.[1]

But before doing this we must make clear what is meant by non-ritualistic and ritualistic prayers. By non-ritualistic prayer we mean those hymns of the *Ṛigveda* which show no definite connexion with the performance of a sacrifice. It is probable a gift or an offering of food or a drink may have accompanied the recitation of this kind of prayer, but in this case praising the powers of the divine being and asking him to grant some blessings constituted the chief part, and the gift or the offering occupied a secondary place. In the case of ritualistic prayers on the other hand, the case was reversed. It was the performance of the sacrifice and the offering that was all-important, and the hymns were used only to invite the gods to come down to the sacrifice. For the sake of brevity we might use the term laudations to denote the former class of hymns and invocations to denote the latter.[2]

The former class is illustrated by many hymns addressed to Uṣas[3] and to the Aśvins, but instances of hymns addressed to other gods, in which no reference to sacrifice is made, are by no means rare. We will mention only a few: X. 42 addressed to Indra; I. 50 and X. 37, to Sūrya; VIII. 47 to the Ādityas; I. 154 to Viṣṇu; VI. 71 to Savitṛ; V. 83 to

[1] cf. however, Oldenberg, RV., pp. 386ff., 430ff.

[2] Discussion on the origin and development of prayer will be found in the chapter on the Indo-Iranian religion. It is expected to justify still further the distinction here made.

[3] Although we may not agree with Bloomfield in all he says about the sacrificial character of the Uṣas hymns, it is a fact that some of these hymns are predominantly ritualistic, e.g. I. 48; 49; etc. In hymn I. 92, which is on the whole purely laudatory, the one comparison of the Dawn's spreading lustre with the anointing of the post at the sacrifice should not, however, be taken to give a sacrificial character to the whole hymn.

Parjanya; X. 168 to Vāta; VI. 64 to Uṣas. In these and in many others,[1] the deity or deities invoked, are not prayed either to come to the sacrifice, or to bring the other gods to it. Nor is it an invitation to the gods to sit on the strewn *kuśa* grass and to drink the pressed *soma*-juice or to partake of the sacrifice, and so far as the evidence of these very hymns goes, they are not meant to accompany the pressing of the *soma*-juice or the offering of an oblation in the fire-altar. The main constituents of these hymns are: the praise of the might and mighty deeds of the god; exhortation to the hymn to go to the god; and asking for blessings in general, such as prosperity or increase of wealth. To bring out the characteristic features of this class of hymns we will quote here hymn VI. 71 as metrically translated by Professor Macdonell.[2]

1. 'God Savitar, the dexterous, has stretched aloft
His arms, that he may stimulate all thing to life.
Young, vigorous, most skilled, with fatness he
His hands besprinkles in the wide expanse of air.

2. May we possess god Savitar's most excellent
Impulsion, and enjoy his lavish gifts of wealth.
Thou art the god who sends to rest and wakes in turn
To life the whole two-footed and four-footed world.

3. With guards that never fail, auspicious, Savitar,
Protect our habitation all around today.
God of the golden tongue, for welfare ever new
Preserve us: let no plotter hold us in his grasp.

4. Like one who rouses, Savitar has stretched out
His golden arms that are so fair of aspect.
The heights of heaven and earth he has ascended,
And made each flying monster cease from troubling.

[1] Other instances are: I. 90, to all gods; VII. 69, to waters; I. 98, to Agni; X. 186, to Vāyu; 127, to Night; I. 157, to Aśvins; 98, to Agni (excepting 6).

[2] *Hymns*, pp. 33-4.

5. Today wealth, Savitar, and wealth tomorrow,
Bring wealth to us each day by thine impulsion;
For over ample wealth, O god, thou rulest;
Through this our hymn may we of wealth be sharers.'

Certain hymns allude to the sacrifice or the sacrificer or something connected with the sacrifice, but still show no signs of being inseparable from those which are mainly and clearly meant to accompany the sacrifice in some form or other. In the hymn I. 51 addressed to Indra, the exhilarating effect of the *soma*-juice on Indra[1] is described and his gift to the *soma*-presser, Kakṣivan, is mentioned.[2] In one stanza he is even asked to become the strong impeller of the sacrificer (*yajamāna*)[3], but still, so far as we can see, there is no clear hint that it was meant to accompany any kind of offering. The hymn concludes with a prayer to be under Indra's protection, as a result of the adoration addressed to that mighty monarch. There are, again, certain hymns addressed almost exclusively to Varuṇa, in which only forgiveness for sins committed through weak-mindedness or thoughtlessness or inadvertance is asked for, and no mention of even a gift offered to the god is made nor the deity's connexion with the sacrifice indicated.[4]

Judging from the use to which these hymns had been put in the later Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas, where each one of the hymns was to be utilized in the *soma* or other sacrifices and offerings by cutting them into parts in an arbitrary manner, which completely destroyed their original character as laudations or invocations, Sanskrit scholars usually describe the purpose of these hymns to be 'to propitiate the gods by laudations that accompanied offerings of melted butter poured on the sacrificial fire and of the juice of the *soma*-plant deposited in vessels on the sacrificial grass'.[5] Now, this

[1] I. 51. 7, 11, 12. [2] I. 51. 13. [3] I. 51. 8.

[4] e.g. VII. 86, 88, 89; in fact there are many hymns addressed to Varuṇa which are more or less non-sacrificial in character.

[5] Macdonell, *Hymns*, p. 7 and VRS., p. xii. In his HSL. (p. 65), he describes the *Ṛigveda* as 'a body of skilfully composed hymns produced by a

is certainly and undoubtedly true of a great number of hymns, e.g. almost all the hymns addressed to Soma Pavamāna and Agni, and many addressed to the Aśvins, the Maruts, Indra, the Viśvedevas, and some addressed to Uṣas even, but fortunately not of all. It does not appear possible, either that the only original motive behind the composition of all the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* was that they should accompany either the fire-offering or the pressing of *soma*, or even, that all the hymns were used for one or the other of these two purposes at any time during the Ṛigvedic period proper, i.e. before those hymns of the *Ṛigveda* which are clearly contemporaneous with the composition of the later Saṁhitās, were composed. For these reasons we have found it needful to make the above mentioned distinction.

On the other hand, there are the ritualistic prayers, which we have here called invocations, because, besides asking for certain blessings, they contain nothing else. These invocations again are of two kinds: (1) those that invite a god or gods to come to the sacrifice, in company with the other gods and sitting on the straw to partake of the offering or drink the *soma*-juice; and (2) those that call on Agni, the divine messenger between gods and men, to bring the gods hither or to take the offered oblation to the gods in heaven. Invocations of the former class are more numerous than those of the latter.

VIII. 8, to the Aśvins:

'With all the aids that are yours 1.
O Asvins, come hither to us
Wondrous ye and of golden paths
Drink this *soma*-juice sweet.

sacerdotal class and meant to accompany the *soma* oblation and the fire sacrifice of melted butter'. In his article on Vedic Religion in the ERE. (XII, p. 610b) again, Macdonell remarks that 'prayer *in the Vedas* is almost entirely of the ritual type, intended to accompany, or at least to form part of a liturgy'. This is a general statement with regard to prayer in all the Vedas, but judging from his opinion of the purpose of the *Ṛigveda* hymns, which we have just referred to, it seems that his opinion about prayer in the *Ṛigveda* is not very much different from ours.

Aśvins come hither to us 2
In a chariot of sun-bright covering,
Patrons, decked with golden ornaments
Sages of great and generous hearts.

Come away from the neighbouring hosts 3.
Urged by good hymns from mid-air
Aśvins, drink this juice sweet
The Kaṇvas have in their festival pressed it.

Invoked[1] with fair hymns, O Vāyu, come, 9.
To our sacrifice that reaches heaven.
Poured through the straining-cloth and mixed
This purified drink is offered thee.

By the most direct paths, the ministering priest 10.
Comes to the sacrifice to accept the gifts
Then, Lord of harnessed teams! do drink
Our twofold *soma*-draught, mixed with milk.'

III. 40, to Indra:

'When the *soma* is pressed, we call on thee. 1.
O Indra, the Bull, drink this sweet juice.

Oft-invoked Indra, accept the strength-bestowing juice; 2.
It is pressed, drink. Pour down the pleasing drink.

Gracious Lord, O Indra, these bright drops of *soma* pressed 4.

Proceed to thy dwelling-place.
Indra, take the excellent *soma*-juice in thy belly, 5.
These drops of heavenly splendour belong to you.'

III. 41, to Indra:

'According to rules the priest is seated;
The grass well strewn and the pressing-stones are set at morn.
These prayers, O worthy of prayers, to you are offered,
O Hero, seat thee on the grass and eat the oblation.'

[1] VIII. 90, to various gods; the above two stanzas are, however, addressed to Vāyu.

We also quote some passages from hymns to Agni:

'We have chosen thee, most skilful god in sacrifice, as the immortal, divine priest of the gods, as the wise performer of this sacrifice;'[1] may he win for us by sacrifice in heaven the good grace of Mitra, Varuṇa, and the waters.[2] 'We choose Agni as our messenger, as a priest who knows everything; the wise performer of this sacrifice. O Agni, born for him who spreads the grass, bring the gods hitherward; thou art our praiseworthy invoker.'[3] 'Send forth an oblation to the lord of forests, to the gods, and let Agni, the immolator, dress it; because, as he knows the generations of gods, he would worship like a more truthful priest. Come, O Agni, to us, duly kindled, bearing Indra and the swift gods on the same car. Let Aditi sit on this our grass and let our Hail! gladden the gods immortal.'[4]

'Agni is Lord of great sacrifice,
Of oblations offered of every kind.
The good gods in his skill delighted,
Wherefore they him oblation-bearer appointed.
O Agni, bear oblation to the gods to eat,
Led by Indra may they here rejoice;
Place this sacrifice in heaven among gods.
May ye (gods) protect us ever with blessings.'[5]

There certainly is a difference between these two kinds of hymns. It would be meaningless to recite the hymns of the second class, without offering the oblation or the sacrifice, and equally meaningless to recite the hymns of the first class when an oblation or an offering was being presented, but of which no mention whatsoever is made. To say that the hymns of the first class, i.e. simple laudations, which contain no invitation to gods to come to the sacrifice, accompanied a sacrifice and were put to purely sacrificial purposes

[1] VIII. 19 (to Agni 1–33 only), 3. [2] VIII. 19. 4. [3] I. 12. 1, 3.
[4] III. 4. 10, 11; see also, I. 26. 1, 2, 6, 10; 189. 3; III. 6; VIII. 19. 3, 4; IV. 2. 1, 4; VIII. 23; X. 118; 122.
[5] VII. 11. 4, 5.

in the Ṛigvedic period, would be to bring a charge of mechanical repetitions against the creative poets of the Ṛigvedic age. In our opinion, this distinction existed not only in that age, but for a considerable time afterwards. Of this the repetition of Gāyatri in India affords a concrete example. Muttering of this most sacred stanza to Savitṛ is an important feature of the everyday worship offered by a Brahmin up to the present time. This muttering is never accompanied by any oblation, far less the pressing of the *soma*-juice, and there is absolutely no evidence to show that it ever was; at least, so far as the daily prayer-offering was concerned. This prayer-offering is known as *sandhyā*,[1] because it was customary to perform it in the morning and evening, the two junctures between the day and the night. Nowadays however a Brahmin performs it at any time during the day that is convenient to him, but as a rule after his bath and before taking his first meal. It is by no means improbable that in this practice of performing *sandhyā* is to be recognized a very old custom of praying in the morning or in the evening by loudly reciting the Ṛigvedic hymns, unaccompanied by any oblations of food or *soma*-juice.

The non-ritualistic prayers appear to us to be a survival of the bardic age, when poetic compositions originating in the praises of kings and nobles formed a very important part, and the chief means of worshipping the gods. The hymns of the *Ṛigveda* show that the standard of poetic excellence was considerably high; and those who composed such pieces of poetry must also have been able—according to their own standard and ideas—to judge which hymn was well composed and which was not. Thus, composing a faultless hymn, to which repeated references are found in the *Ṛigveda*, could have meant nothing else but a hymn which possessed a high degree of poetic beauty. It is probable that sometimes the hymns composed by a particular person may have been

[1] cf. Monier-Williams, *Place of the Ṛigveda in Sandhyā*, address delivered before the International Congress of Orientalists at Berlin, published London, 1881, p. 8.

regarded as more powerful in winning the favour of a god or gods, irrespective of their poetic merit[1]—a belief induced by accidental coincidences. But this could not have been the rule, because that would hardly justify the keen desire for a good composition. As a rule, an irresistible hymn of this period must have been one which lauded the god or gods in the most pleasing words and not one which was believed to possess magical power.

Nor are direct indications of the existence of worshipping without sacrifice altogether wanting. The following passages, occurring in the first book, support this statement:

*Agniṁ sūktebhir vacobhir īmahe* ||[2].
*Ṛcas tam Agniṁ vardhayāmasi* ||[3]
*Sa id vane namasyubhir vacasyate* ||[4]
*Saṁjānānā upasīdann abhijñu* |
*Patnīvanto namasyannamasyan* ||[5]

The importance of the non-ritualistic prayers, however, may have rapidly diminished owing to the growing importance of the sacrifice, and the whole body of hymns of the *Ṛigveda* may have been regarded as serving the purpose of only the sacrifice as early as the latter half of the Ṛigvedic period.

(*b*) *Sacrifice.* The *Ṛigveda* itself supplies us with scanty information of the actual forms of sacrifice current in that period. It is, however, very probable that the various *soma*-sacrifices of the later times, together with the production and the establishing of fires (*agnyādhāna*), the offering of oblations (*haviryajñas*), the 'four-monthly' or seasonal offerings (*cāturmāsyas*), the evening and morning rites (*sāyaṁ-prātar-homas*), the animal sacrifices (*paśuyajñas*), and the horse-sacrifice (*aśva-medha*) existed in a comparatively simpler form.[6]

[1] e.g. VII. 83. 4, where Tṛtsu's prayers are said to have come true.
[2] I. 36. 1. [3] I. 36. 11. [4] I. 55. 4.
[5] I. 72. 5: see also, I. 12. 11, *gāyatreṇa navīyasā.*
[6] The existence of human sacrifice (*puruṣa-medha*) is not proved beyond doubt (cf. Macdonell, VR., p. 612b.) According to Hillebrandt, however,

The Vedic sacrifice consisted, in the main, of the offering of oblations in the sacrificial fire, 'the mouth of the gods', by which they were believed to be conveyed to the gods. This fire was either produced from the two fire-sticks (*araṇīs*), or obtained from some traditionally sacred source (e.g. the house of a great sacrificer), and then established in a sacred place chosen for the purpose. The Śrauta ceremonies required the use of three fires, viz. the Gārhapatya, the Āhavanīya and the Dakṣiṇā, while the Gṛhya (domestic) ceremonies required only one. By the side of the sacrificial fire, a litter of grass was spread. This was meant to be a soft seat for the gods to sit upon and partake of the offerings.

Exceptionally, however, the use of fire was dispensed with. Thus 'oblations to certain aquatic deities were cast into water, those to the dead were placed in small pits at the funeral sacrifice, while offerings to Rudra and demons were thrown into the air, hung on trees, buried or disposed of in other ways'.[1]

In the *soma*-sacrifices, the three pressings, at morning, noon and night, were known. The *soma* was first pressed and then purified. It was offered to the gods, but was also ceremoniously drunk by priests. The morning pressing belonged to the Aśvins and the midday pressing exclusively to Indra, but Indra in addition had a share in the other pressings. The preliminary rite of initiation (*dīkṣā*), which was intended to make the sacrificer and his wife fit to perform the sacred ceremonies, as well as the rite of purification (*avabhṛta*), may go back to the period of the *Ṛigveda*.[2]

In the *Ṛigveda* we also hear of the measuring of the fire altar,[3] the anointing of the sacrificial pole (*yūpāñjana*),[4]

'there were in ancient India even human sacrifices, celebrated with the same pomp and following nearly the same ritual as the horse-sacrifice, till they were gradually replaced by the milder practice of an ordinary *paśubandha*'. —'Worship (Hindu)', ERE., XII, p. 797[a]; cf. also 'Human Sacrifice (Indian)', ERE., VI, p. 849f.

[1] Macdonell, VR., p. 611[b].
[2] ibid., p. 614[b].
[3] *Amimīta vedim*, X. 61. 2.
[4] III. 8.

the reciting of the *śastras* and the *sāmans*, etc.[1] The *nivids*, which play an important part in later ritual, were already used,[2] and the difference between the offering of oblations with *svāhā* and the *vāṣaṭkāra* recognized.[3] Among the sacrificial implements *droṇa*,[4] *juhu*,[5] *sruva*,[6] *sruci*,[7] *camasa*,[8] etc. are mentioned. The objects of sacrifice were the various articles of food used by the Vedic Indians themselves. Thus the oblations were prepared from barley and rice, and the various dairy products, such as milk, curds, ghee, etc., and the animals that were offered in the sacrifice were cattle, goats, and sheep. 'On the other hand, animals the flesh of which was not eaten at all or only exceptionally eaten, such as the pig, dog, deer, as well as fish and birds, were not sacrificed to the gods.'[9] In the sacrifice of the horse we have an important exception, since 'its flesh was never a regular article of diet'.[10]

Since the *soma*-sacrifice, which required the largest number of priests, was the most important sacrifice of the period, division of functions among the priests had gone a fair way. Indeed, as Professor Keith observes, 'the specialization of the ritual is as old as the Indo-Iranian period'.[11] We thus find the following names: *hotṛ*, *potṛ*, *neṣṭṛ*, *agnīdhra*, *praśastā*, *adhvaryu*, *brahman*.[12] The Hotṛ, with whom the Praśastṛ was closely connected in the *Ṛigveda*, was the invoker of the gods by reciting the hymns.[13] The Potṛ and the Agnīdhra attended the sacrificial fire; the Adhvaryu, even in the Ṛigvedic period, as later, was probably the chief of officiating priests; the Neṣṭṛ may have been connected with the rites to be performed by the wife of the sacrificer; and the Brahman of the *Ṛigveda* may have been, as Professor

1 V. 18. 4; VI. 29. 4; VII. 33. 14; VIII. 2. 14; I. 107. 2; IV. 4. 15.
2 I. 142. 12, 13; II. 36. 1; III. 4, 11; V. 5, 11.
3 I. 14. 8; 31. 5; 120. 4; II. 36. 1; VII. 15. 6.
4 IX. 3. 1.
5 I. 76. 5; 145. 3; II. 27. 1; VIII. 44. 5.
6 I. 116. 24; 121. 6.
7 I. 110. 6.
8 I. 54. 9; VIII. 71. 7.
9 Macdonell, VR., p. 612a.
10 ibid.
11 op. cit., p. 312b.
12 II. 1. 2; X. 91. 10; see also, IV. 9. 3, 4; I. 162. 5.
13 I. 14. 9; 13. 1.

Keith conjectures, the name of the priest later called Brāhmaṇācchaṁsin, an assistant of the Hotṛ.[1] An indirect reference to the Brāhmaṇācchaṁsin is also found in the following passage of the *Ṛigveda*:

*brahmaputra iva savaneṣu śaṁsasi.*[2]

Mention is also found of the Udgrābha and the Grāvagrābha,[3] probably the drawers of water and holders of the pressing-stones, and the Samitṛs,[4] the slayers of the sacrificial victims. In the later ritual, the former two disappear altogether, while the latter become merely attendant priests.[5] There were also the *sāman*-singers who, instead of simply repeating the hymns, sang them.[6]

It is, however, improbable that this division of functions was rigidly followed. This is clear from what is said of the functions of the Adhvaryu and the Brahman. The Adhvaryu is said to offer the *soma*-juice[7] and the oblations of food,[8] to spread the sacrificial grass, to make the fire blaze up,[9] to press the *soma*,[10] etc. while the Brahman is said to recite the hymns,[11] to wield the pressing-stones, and offer the *soma*-juice.[12]

In the *Ṛigveda* itself there is hardly any trace of the Gṛhya-ceremonies, and it is extremely likely that certain customary rites were current even then; rites which are described in the *Gṛhya Sūtras* in a modified form. These again may have been, as Oldenberg remarks, not yet 'decked out with the reciting of the poetic texts, which we find later on connected with them, and which in the case of the *soma*-offering came to be used early.[13]

[1] ERE., op. cit. [2] II. 43. 2. [3] I. 162. 5.
[4] I. 162. 10; V. 85. 1. [5] Keith, op. cit.
[6] V. 71. 11; II. 43. 2. [7] II. 14; 37. 1; VII. 98. 1.
[8] II. 14. 5; VII. 2. 4; VIII. 90. 10. [9] IV. 8. 4.
[10] V. 37. 2; VIII. 4. 11; X. 17. 12; IV. 51. 1.
[11] *Tameva ṛṣiṁ tamu brahmāṇamāhur yajñanyaṁ sāmagām ukthaśāsam*, X. 107. 6.
[12] VIII. 32. 16; 17. 3.
[13] Introduction to the Gṛhya Sūtras: SBE., XXX, p. 9.

As has been remarked above, the sacrifice in the *Ṛigveda* was intended to win the favour of gods and thus gain some worldly benefit. The offering of *soma*-juice was believed to gladden and strengthen the gods, but especially Indra. It was indeed thought, that just as a well-composed hymn could not but please the god lauded, so a well-performed sacrifice was also considered to fulfil the worshipper's desire. That the worshipper had but rarely any misgivings as to the effect of the prayer or the sacrifice, was due to the fact that his attitude towards the predominantly beneficent gods was one of unswerving confidence. This confidence, however, undergoes a degeneration even in the period of the *Ṛigveda*. Thus, as Professor Macdonell remarks: 'Traces of the notion that the sacrifice exercises compulsion not only over gods but also over natural phenomena, without requiring the co-operation of the gods, are already to be found even in the *Ṛigveda*'.[1]

### 4. *Estimate*

We have already sketched the religious beliefs and practices as they existed at the end of the Indo-Iranian period. The immediate generations of the separated group of the Indo-Aryans continued to compose poems in praise of the Nature-gods, which were meant to be sung with the *soma*-sacrifice. The need of these praises and sacrifices so far as they were the product of the feeling of dependence on, and fear, awe, and reverence of the uncontrollable natural forces had, with the milder climate, begun to decrease, but on the other hand it was felt more keenly because of the human foes with whom they now came into conflict, namely, the Dasyus. This necessitated the invocations as a means of self-preservation, and thus the inspired character of the poetry begun during the late Indo-Iranian period was maintained. The whole of the *Ṛigveda* is full of invocations to gods to destroy the Dāsas or to give more power over the dark-skinned, or to bestow wealth and strong sons. These prayers are especially and in a

[1] VR., p. 611b.

way exclusively addressed to Indra, who is the most important god of the Vedic pantheon. Without this external danger, it is not unlikely that the pure nature-religion of the Indo-Iranian and the early Vedic periods would have begun to degenerate much earlier than it actually did. For, in our opinion, the sort of sublime nature-religion which consisted in believing that the natural phenomena alone were the gods, and in which the pressing of the *soma* and offering smaller sacrifices to the various gods were the only important religious ceremonies, could never—especially in the old days when they originated and for a time existed in a more or less pure form—have continued to exist much longer in the same healthy condition. Such a feeling of awe and reverence of the gods as was necessary for this religion could, even in our own day, be felt by only few. The feeling is too sublime and the necessary intensity too great to be sustained undiminished for a long time.

Moreover, there was nothing else to which the ordinary people, who cannot have truly understood the nature of this elevated religion, could hold, except the *soma*-sacrifice and the fire-offerings; because the conception of the natural phenomena as gods is highly abstract, and as such could not have a strong hold on the minds of the common people. The *soma*-sacrifice, again, could be performed by but a few and, therefore, properly understood by as small a number. There indeed existed some domestic rites and sacrifices which could be performed by every householder without the help of a priest and without repeating the Vedic texts. But even their proper performance soon required the reciting of the sacred verses.

Thus, with the growth of the sacrificial detail, the importance of inspired poetry had begun to decrease. Instead, to it was being attributed a legendary power of compelling the gods to do the worshipper's bidding, when it was accompanied by an appropriate sacrificial act. This was again helped by the conscious selfishness of the priests who devoted themselves solely to making the sacrifices more and more

complicated, to exaggerating the purpose and the usefulness of the sacrifice and to singing the praises of the liberal givers of wealth.

The elevated tone of the original religion is not, however, as yet completely overshadowed by extreme hieratic propensities. The idea of receiving something in return is, indeed, everywhere present and sometimes very fine poetry is marred by references to the sacrifice and the priestly fee. But this selfish desire for gain is not unnatural and there is nothing exceptionally sordid about it, as some authors like Bloomfield, by a sort of reaction against the opinion that the religion in the *Ṛigveda* is highly sublime and lofty, have held.[1] If the desire for gain is removed, we can hardly see what object there was in the composition of the hymns, as it is a fact that the majority of the hymns were not composed simply because the poets delighted in doing so. It is true the poets were handsomely rewarded for their compositions even then, and as a result, they laid more stress on their own fees as priests by praising the liberality of their benefactors. It is also true that it was this same simple idea of asking blessings from the gods that assumed the disgusting character of *dakṣiṇā* in later Hinduism; but still, what we find in the *Ṛigveda* is understandable and natural, being accountable on the broad principle that man is by nature selfish rather than by any extraordinary selfishness and cunning of the Brahmins.

We will conclude this part with the observation that the Nature-religion of the Indo-Iranian period reached its highest point in the middle of the Ṛigvedic period; but having reached it, began rapidly to degenerate owing to contact with the backward races, settled and isolated life, climatic conditions, and the increase of population.

[1] See especially Hopkins, RI., pp. 8–22; Muir, V, pp. 412ff.; Barth, RI., p. xiii.

# PART IV

# BRAHMANISM

## CHAPTER XIV

# CIVILIZATION AND GODS IN GENERAL

### *The Term Brahmanism*

THE phase of religion which begins to appear in the latest portions of the *Ṛigveda* and which begins to receive a more or less definite form in the *Yajurveda* and parts of the *Atharvaveda*, culminates in the Brāhmaṇas. In the Sūtras it receives a little more systematic treatment, but from the point of view of innovations or drastic modifications, the religion in the older Sūtras, at any rate, remains essentially unchanged. The religion in the Brāhmaṇas is predominantly ritualistic, and as distinguished from the Nature-religion of the *Ṛigveda*, it may be conveniently called Brahmanism.

Professor Jacobi[1] begins his article 'Brahmanism' as follows:

> 'The word "Brahmanism" seems originally to have been used, and popularly still to be understood, to denote the religion of those inhabitants of India who adored Brahma as their supreme God, in contradistinction to those who professed Buddhism, and, in more recent times, Muhammadanism. But this is founded upon a misconception. Brahma was never universally worshipped; and his acknowledgement as the supreme God is not even true, still less a prominent characteristic of Brahmanical religions and sects.'

The word has indeed, so far as we know, originated among, and is more or less confined to, the Western scholars of Sanskrit, and is hardly to be found in Indian literatures. And this was indeed to be expected. Had the term originated in India, it would have meant, either the religion of those who worshipped Brahma as the supreme God—which

[1] ERE., II, p. 799[b].

meaning Professor Jacobi truly observes it never had, since Brahma was never so worshipped—or the religion of the Brahmans. The Brahmans, however, were wise enough not to use this name for a religion which was followed by three other great classes besides themselves, although it is historically true, to a certain extent, that the Indian religion of the post-Ṛigvedic periods is but what the Brahmans succeeded in making of the religion of the *Ṛigveda*.[1] The true sense in which it is sometimes used is that it is a religion the teachings of which are mainly to be found in books called the Brāhmaṇas. The Indians, however, could not have used the term in this sense, because the Brāhmaṇas form an inseparable part of the Veda, or *śruti*, and a notion of their existence as a separate class of literature is singularly inconspicuous. Used in the above sense Brahmanism becomes a very convenient term. Not only does it clearly indicate its connexion with the extensive Brāhmaṇa literature, but it also at once suggests the idea of the ritual, which is undoubtedly the most dominating factor in the religion of this period.

What we call Brahmanism, however, neither begins nor ends with the Brāhmaṇas. It has its faint beginnings in some of the hymns of the *Ṛigveda* and, continuing to develop throughout the period during which the later Saṁhitās came into existence, it attained a definite form in the *Yajurveda*. This ritualistic spirit of religion continued to pervade and dominate, not only literature, but both life and thought, till the rise of the two rival religions (at least so they are called) Jainism and Buddhism. Thus Brahmanism may be taken to denote the form of religion which existed in India from the end of the Ṛigvedic period to about the sixth century B.C.

[1] This is probably true of most religions. In their details, religions become what the priesthood succeeds in making of them, consciously or otherwise.

*Growth of Civilization*

By the end of the period of the *Ṛigveda*, the Punjab ceased to be the centre of Indo-Aryan habitation. Fighting their way through the unknown land, the Indo-Aryan invaders were gradually occupying more and more territory to the east and south, everywhere asserting themselves as conquerors and rulers, and imposing on the original inhabitants of India their own language, religion, and customs; but at the same time, unconsciously but inevitably assimilating some of the beliefs and practices of these conquered races.

At the end of the Brāhmaṇa period we find that they had reached the Vindhyas, but these do not appear to have been crossed.[1] The land of the five rivers (*pañcanada*) is no longer prominent. Now it is the 'firmly established Madhyadeśa',[2] the 'middle country', and Kurukṣetra the holy 'land of the Kurus', a place of divine worship (*devayajanam*) since 'the gods perform their sacrifice in Kurukṣetra'.[3] According to Manu, 'Madhyadeśa consisted of Brahmāvarta, the land famous in the *Ṛigveda*[4] between the Sarasvatī and the Dṛṣadvatī and the country of the Brahmarṣis lying to the east of Brahmāvarta and extending as far as Prayāga'. 'The region bounded by the Himālayas on the north, the Vindhyas on the south, and by seas on the east and the west' is known to Manu as Āryāvarta, the 'abode of the Āryas'.[5] 'This,' Barth remarks, 'is nearly the geography of the Brāhmaṇas'.[6]

The change in the geographical position was extended over a considerable length of time, and was naturally accompanied by the redistribution of tribes and advance in material and mental culture. Thus, the Bharatas, the heroes of the third and the seventh book of the *Ṛigveda*, do not appear so prominently, although the great deeds of the Bharata kings were still remembered and extolled. We

[1] Rapson, AI., p. 47; Keith, CHI., I, p. 117.
[2] AB., VIII. 14.
[3] *Śat.*, XIV. 1. 1. 2; IV. 1. 5. 13.
[4] III. 23. 4.
[5] Manu, II. 17–24.
[6] RI., p. 62, n. 2; see also, Muir, II, p. 397f.

have, instead, the two allied tribes of the Kurus and the Pañcālas. They are often called by one name, the Kuru-Pañcālas, and among the tribes of this period they occupy a unique position, since they are looked upon as an ideal tribe. They are believed to preserve the best tradition of the Vedas and the Brāhmaṇas, and to possess learned Brāhmaṇas; they perform the sacrifices perfectly, speak the purest speech, and are governed by ideal kings.[1]

When there was a doubt whether an oblation should consist of a four-fold or a five-fold cutting, it is said: 'The four-fold cutting is, however, the approved [custom] among the Kuru-Pañcālas and for this reason, a four-fold cutting [should] take place.'[2] 'Speech', it is said, 'sounds higher here among the Kuru-Pañcālas',[3] and 'the Kuru-Pañcāla kings speak with authority, because they were the performers of the Rājasūya'.[4] Later the Kurus and the Pañcālas are represented as enemies, and a great war betwixt them forms the subject of one of the two great epics of India, viz. the *Mahābhārata*. This enmity, however, cannot be proved to go back to the Brāhmaṇa period.[5] The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* states that the Bharatas, the Kuru-Pañcālas, the Vaśas, and the Uṣīnaras were the inhabitants of the Madhyadeśa.[6] Besides this, Magadha, Videha, Kosala, and Kāśī appear as more or less independent kingdoms.

The power and influence of the king as attested by the complicated ritual Rājasūya, the 'Royal Consecration',[7] and the later horse-sacrifice[8] seems to have been on the increase. This may have been due to assimilation of the petty chieftains of the Ṛigvedic period or the progress of Aryan

1 VI., I, pp. 165–9; Keith, CHI., I, pp. 118-9; Dutt, CAI., I, p. 121.

2 *Śat.*, I. 7. 2. 8.

3 *Śat.*, III. 2. 3. 15, as tr. by Eggling, SBE., XXVI, p. 50; see his note on this passage. See also VI., I, p. 168.

4 *Śat.*, V. 5. 2. 5; see also Keith, TS., I, p. xciii.

5 Keith, CHI., I, p. 119f. On Kuruṣketra and the Kuru-Pañcālas see also, Keith, RB., p. 45; Winternitz, I, p. 170; Weber, HIL., p. 45; Hopkins, RI., p. 177

6 VIII. 14. 7 AB., VII. 19—VIII. 28; *Śat.*, V. 2–5.

8 *Śat.*, XIII. 1–5.

conquest. Yet, 'we must not assume', says Professor Keith,[1] 'that, even in this period, there were great kingdoms'. The king must have controlled the land of the tribe and wielded considerable authority. His office was hereditary and he was assisted by a long *entourage* of ministers and officers, such as the *sūta* 'charioteer', the *senānī* 'commander of the army', the purohita, etc.[2]

Side by side with these comparatively small kingdoms ruled over by a hereditary king, there may have existed some clans or tribes, which had a republican government of some sort or other. This has been rendered probable by the evidence, assuredly fragmentary, of the Pāli literature, brought forward by Professor Rhys Davids.[3] If the existence of these republics can be proved during the early Buddhistic period, i.e. about the fifth and the sixth centuries B.C., there can be no doubt that they must have existed at least a couple of centuries before that time. So far as the evidence takes us, we find that the 'administrative business ... was carried out in public assembly, at which young and old were alike present'.[4] There was no system of voting, but cases involving a difference of opinion seem to have been customarily referred to the arbitration of committees. A single chief was also chosen, and although he appears to have been called a *rājā* he was in fact a Consul or President of the General Assembly, or the Senate where it existed.[5]

Judicial procedure seems to have still been in a crude condition and although trial of criminals by ordeal was not practised on any scale, it does not appear to have been altogether unknown. For, in the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[6] we have the following passage: 'If he (a man) committed a theft (and) then he ... grasps the heated hatchet (which was heated for him), he is burnt, and he is killed. But if he did not commit the theft, then he ... grasps the heated

[1] CHI., I, p. 130. [2] ibid.
[3] *Buddhist India*, and more recently, CHI., I, pp. 174ff.
[4] Davids, CHI., I, p. 176; *Digha Nikāya*, I. 91. [5] Davids, loc. cit.
[6] VI. 16; cited by Dutt, CAI., p. 173; see also *Vedic Index*, I, pp. 304, 364-5.

hatchet, he is not burnt, and is delivered.' But on the whole a growing sense of justice and a higher conception of law is manifested. Thus we read in the *Bṛhad Āraṇyaka* :[1]

'Law is the Kṣatra (power) of the Kṣatra, therefore there is nothing higher than the law. Thenceforth even a weak man rules a stronger with the help of the law as with the help of a king.'

One noteworthy feature of the period is the beginning of a preference given to a Brāhman in legal cases, which ultimately received a definite sanction and had become established law by the time of the *Manu-Smṛti*. Since then, right up to the present day, 'killing of a Brāhman' (*Brahmahatyā*[2]) is the greatest imaginable sin that can be committed. Its beginning is probably to be found in a passage of the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[3] which reads as follows:

'If a Brāhman and a non-Brāhman have a litigation, one should support the Brāhman; if one supports the Brāhman, one supports oneself; if one opposes the Brāhman, one opposes oneself; therefore one should not oppose a Brāhman.' When one reads that the Brāhmans were audacious enough to call themselves the earthly gods, this claim to a special position at law is not at all surprising.[4]

During this period considerable progress appears to have been made in pastoral and agricultural pursuits, and from the great variety of names for persons following different occupations, it is clear that industrial life also was much developed. We hear of hunters, fishermen, basket-makers, rope-makers, potters, cooks, barbers, astrologers, as well as oarsmen, professional acrobats and players of drums and flutes. The merchant is often mentioned and the usurer has a special name.[5] In the *Atharvaveda*, Indra himself is

[1] I. 4. 14, cited by Dutt, op. cit., p. 173.

[2] Found in the TS., II. 5. 1. 2 and *Śat.*, XIII. 3. 1. 1, where it is said to be redeemable by an *aśva-medha*.

[3] II. 5. 11; see Professor Keith's note on the passage in his tr., p. 203, n. 2 and *Vedic Index*, II, p. 83.

[4] See below, and Dutt, CAI., I, pp. 231-2.

[5] *Kusīdin*, *Śat.*, XIII. 4. 3. 11.

called 'a merchant'.[1] The use of tin, lead, silver, gold and iron was known;[2] horses were used for riding, and elephants were tamed although they do not appear to have yet been used in war.[3]

The food still consisted of meat and grain, but the variety of grain known appears to have been considerably increased since the time of the *Ṛigveda*.[4] An ox or a cow was still customarily killed, when a king or an honoured guest was to be received.[5] There does not as yet appear any express prohibition against flesh-eating, nor was the doctrine of *ahiṁsā* (harmlessness) formulated. The flesh of the animal offered at a sacrifice is said to be 'the best kind of food',[6] and Yājñavalkya declares that he has no objection to eating meat provided it was 'tender' (*aṁsala*),[7] although it was concluded that the flesh of a cow or an ox may not be eaten. On the other hand, it is said that flesh should not be eaten during the period of initiation for the sacrifice,[8] that a bull is sacred to Agni and that a cow should not be harmed.[9] These are, however, merely occasional utterances without much serious signification. Drinking of *surā* was, however, regarded as a sinful act.

There may have been some modifications in the art of cooking; and the manner of dressing, although it remained essentially unchanged, may have become more refined and ornamental as the arts of weaving, etc. progressed.

Towns begin to appear, but the houses were still built of wood. The family relations continued to be the same, but the position of women seems to have suffered a little.[10] Widow-marriage, however, still existed and child marriage was unknown.[11] To the amusements of the previous period, e.g.

[1] III. 15. 1. [2] VS., XVIII. 13; *Chānd.*, IV. 17. 7.
[3] Keith, CHI., I, p. 137.
[4] *Bṛh.*, VI. 3. 13 gives a list of ten grains; see also VS., XVIII. 12.
[5] AB., I. 15. [6] *Śat.*, IX. 7. 1. 3. [7] *Śat.*, III. 1. 2. 21.
[8] *Śat.*, VI. 2. 2. 39. [9] *Śat.*, VII. 5. 2. 19.
[10] VI., p. 486; Keith, CHI.; cf. *Śat.*, I. 9. 2. 12; Hopkins, JAOS., XIII, p. 365 n.
[11] VI., pp. 474-8; the authors of the *Vedic Index* consider *satī* 'to have been, at least as a rule, in abeyance during the Vedic age'.—p. 488.

chariot-racing, playing at dice, etc., dancing was added. The community was tolerably well educated and great respect was paid to the learned irrespective of his birth.

Out of the four stages (*āśrama*) into which the life of a Hindu was later divided, the first stage had already become a matter of general practice. It was called *Brahmacarya* 'meaning the stage of religious studentship', a term which continued to be used throughout the Sanskrit as well as the Aryan vernacular literatures. The rules of this studentship are found in one of the hymns of the *Atharvaveda*,[1] where the importance of Brahmacarya is highly praised.[2] The youth has first to be initiated by a teacher; he has then to put on the skin of an antelope, grow long hair (*dīrghaśmaśru*), to collect fuel, to bear alms (to his teacher), worship, learn and practice penance.[3] Elsewhere, he is said to live with his teacher[4] and look after his cattle, house and sacrificial fires.[5] The period of studentship was normally twelve years,[6] but it might be extended to thirty-two years or might even be for life.[7] All this is systematically and elaborately stated by Manu.[8]

In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*[9] we find a long list of arts and sciences among which are the following: Mathematics, Augury (*daiva*), Grammar (Veda of the Vedas), Chronology, Logic, Polity, Theology (*deva-vidyā*), Demonology (*bhūta-vidyā*), Astrology (*nakṣatra-vidyā*), and the arts of fighting, and snake-charming. Besides these there certainly existed the arts of music and dancing as well as the science of medicine. The latter, however, appears first to have been neglected, then suspected (e.g. in TS., VI. 4. 9. 3) and finally, as is the case in the Sūtra literature, utterly despised.[10] The neglect might have been due to the belief that the same purpose is better served by magical incantations as found in the *Atharva-*

[1] XI. 5.
[2] XI., 16–22, etc.
[3] XI., 3–6, 9; *Vedic Index*, II, p. 75.
[4] *Chānd.*, II. 23. 2.
[5] op. cit., IV. 4. 5; 8. 1; *Śat.*, III. 6. 2. 15.
[6] *Chānd.*, IV. 10. 1.
[7] op. cit., VIII. 7. 3; 15.
[8] II. 70–249; cf. CB., I. 2. 1–8.
[9] VII. 1. 2. 4; 2. 1; etc.
[10] VI., pp. 100–5; see Āp. Dh.S., I. 6. 18. 20; Dh.S., XVIII. 17; etc.

*veda*. But when these practices were themselves looked upon with disfavour, purely medical art was suspected of witchery, since many of the charms in the *Atharvaveda* are associated with the healing powers of herbs. This suspicion may later have grown into contempt. This appears to us a plausible explanation.

It may be mentioned that an Indian peasant of the present day, although he does not altogether despise medicine, would rather trust to the goodwill of a deity by contracting to offer something, than to any medical treatment. Occasionally, but much less frequently, he has recourse to a person believed to possess the power to have communication with some deity. This person then reveals the cause of the calamity, and gives to the sufferer some water or something else, occasionally some herb, over which he has repeated a magic formula. A person believed to know the medical art, as well as to possess magical skill is always preferred to one who knows only the former.

We will now briefly trace the growth of class distinctions. In addition to the hereditary priesthood and nobility of the previous period, this period saw the growth of a third class, viz. the *Vaiśyas*, who originally constituted the mass of the Aryan community; and the original inhabitants of India, the Dāsas or Dasyus of the Ṛigvedic period, formed the fourth class and were called the *Śūdras*. Thus the four classes were Brāhman, Rājanya (or Kṣatriya), Vaiśya and Śūdra. Although these classes were distinguished from each other and their duties and prerogatives to a certain extent formulated and fixed, change of caste, if it may be so called, was as yet possible. This was especially so between the first two classes, of which we find a number of instances in the literature of this period; e.g. Janaka, King of Videha, imparted knowledge to the priest Yājñavalkya and was thenceforth considered a Brāhman,[1] and Kavaṣa, a son of a slave girl, was later admitted to be a *ṛṣi*.[2]

[1] *Śat.*, XI. 6. 2. 1.

[2] AB., II 19; see also *Chānd.*, IV. 4.

In a late passage of the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*,[1] the Rājanya is taken as the norm and the remaining three classes are described thus:

'A Brāhman (is) an acceptor of gifts, a drinker (of *soma*), a seeker of livelihood, one to be removed at will.'

'A Vaiśya (is) tributary to another, to be eaten by another, to be oppressed at will.'

'A Śūdra (is) the servant of another, to be removed at will, to be slain at will.'

This passage indicates the superiority of the Rājanya or the Kṣatriya over the other classes, and there are some other passages in the literature of this period to the same effect.[2] But on the whole, the claims for superiority of the Brāhmans as a class, are much more frequent and much more boldly asserted. Thus Varuṇa is reported to have declared that 'a Brāhman was higher than a Kṣatriya',[3] while in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* we repeatedly hear: 'There are two kinds of gods: for indeed, the gods are gods; and the Brāhmans who have studied and teach sacred lore are the human gods.'[4]

In another passage a Brāhman descended from a Ṛṣi is said to represent all the deities.[5]

In many places, however, a much more compromising attitude is shown. Thus, the welfare of both the Brāhman and the Kṣatriya (*brahma, kṣatra*) is often prayed for,[6] and they are together said to be the 'towers of strength'[7] or

[1] VII. 29.

[2] e.g. 'A Kṣatriya, by dint of his energy, can ask a Vaiśya to deliver to him whatever the latter possesses.'—*Śat.*, I. 3. 2. 15; 'The Kṣatriya is said to be superior to the Viś, who is to serve him.'—*Śat.*, I. 3. 4. 15. 'The Rājanya makes the other three sorts of men obedient to him.'—TS., II. 5, 10. 1.

[3] AB., VII. 15.

[4] II. 2. 2. 6; 4. 3. 14; IV. 3. 4. 4; etc.; see also, TS., I. 7. 3. 1; AV., V. 17–19; *Śat.*, XIII. 1. 5. 4; IV. 1. 4. 6; V. 4. 4. 15; *Mait.*, IV. 3. 8.

[5] *Śat.*, XII. 4. 4. 6, 7; cf. Manu, *avidvāñscaiva vidvāñsca brāhmaṇo daivataṁ mahat* (IX. 317); *sarvathā brāhmaṇaḥ pūjyaḥ paramam daivataṁ hi tat* (IX. 319).

[6] *Śat.*, III. 5. 2. 11; I. 2. 1. 7.

[7] *Śat.*, I. 2. 1. 7.

the 'two vital forces'.[1] In the *Taittirīya Saṁhitā*[2] the priestly power is said to be quickened by the kingly power, and the kingly power by the priestly power. This attitude is, however, quite natural. After all a Brahman had to depend greatly on the liberality of the Rājanya, and however much he may persuade the Rājanya not to oppress him, or to take and eat his cow,[3] because in the end it will be worse for him,[4] he was, to a certain extent at least, afraid of him.

## *Brāhmanical Gods Generally*

### *Introduction*

The pantheon of this period is on the whole the same as that of the *Ṛigveda*, and the gods, excepting when ritualistically described, are generally spoken of in the same terms. This is partly due to the fact that the whole of the literature of this period contains profuse quotations from the *Ṛigveda*, which are meant to be repeated during the performance of the sacrifice. The meaning of these passages, however, received but scanty attention, and with the growing complications of the sacrifice and the development of philosophical thinking, the importance of the gods greatly diminished, till at last they became mere figure-heads. Yet there is a certain number of modifications which have come about during this period. We will briefly trace the modifications and changes in the nature and conception of gods in general.

### *Their Number*

As in the *Ṛigveda* the number of gods is still said to be thirty-three[5] and it is expressly stated that 'the gods are just as many now as there were in the beginning'.[6] In the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*[7] they are once said to be three thousand

[1] III. 5. 2. 11; see Manu, IX. 322.
[2] V. 1. 10. 3.
[3] AV., V. 18; 19.
[4] *Śat.*, XIII. 1, 5. 4.
[5] AV., X. 7. 13; 9. 12; *Kauṣ.*, VIII. 6; *Śat.*, XII. 8. 29; TS., II. 4. 2; for the three-fold division of these thirty-three gods, as the gods who are eleven in heaven, eleven in air, and eleven on earth, see, AV., XIX. 27. 11–13.
[6] *Śat.*, VIII. 7. 1, 9; Tḍ. B., VI. 9. 16.
[7] XXXIII. 7.

three hundred and thirty-nine; but this passage is borrowed from the *Ṛigveda*.[1] Exceptionally again, they are said to be thirty-four.[2] This number is obtained by adding Prajāpati to the usual thirty-three gods. Unlike the *Ṛigveda*, however, which makes no attempt to determine who these thirty-three gods are, we are here told that out of them the first thirty-one are eight Vasus, eleven Rudras and twelve Ādityas. But the remaining two are not always the same. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* in one place[3] states them to be Indra and Prajāpati; the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* calls them Vaṣaṭ and Prajāpati; while in another place in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Dyaus and Pṛthivī make up the thirty-three, but Prajāpati is added as the thirty-fourth.

When Yājñavalkya[4] was once questioned with regard to the number of gods, he said they were 303, 3003, 33, 3, one and a half and one. Later, however, he declares that '303 and 3003 were their powers (*mahimānaḥ*) but that there were indeed 33 gods'. He then added: 'They are 8 Vasus, 11 Rudras, 12 Ādityas, Indra and Prajāpati. The 8 Vasus are, Agni, the Earth, Vāyu (the wind), the Air, Āditya (the sun), Heaven, the Moon and the Stars. These are called Vasus because they cause all this [universe] to abide (*vas*). The Ādityas are the twelve months and are so called because while passing they lay hold (*ā-dā*) on everything here. Indra is the thunder and Prajāpati the sacrifice.'[5]

Referring to the above three principal groups, viz. the Vasus, the Rudras and the Ādityas, the gods are said to be of three kinds (*traya vai devāḥ*)[6] or of three orders (*trayāvṛto vai devāḥ*).[7] As contrasted with the Brāhmans, however, there are said to be two kinds of gods: 'the gods who are gods and the human gods, the priests.'[8]

[1] III. 9. 9; X. 52. 6.
[2] *Śat.*, IV. 5. 7. 2; V. 1. 2. 13; 3. 4. 23.
[3] XI. 6. 3. 5.
[4] XI. 6. 3. 4–9; see Eggling's tr. in SBE., XLIV; see also Lévi, DS., p. 37, n. 1.
[5] See Griffiths' note on AV., X. 7, 13.
[6] *Śat.*, IV. 3. 5. 1.
[7] *Śat.*, XIII. 1. 7. 2.
[8] *Śat.*, II. 2. 2. 6.

*Their Abodes*

They are also, as in the *Ṛigveda*,[1] regarded as dwelling in heaven, air and earth: 'Gods are three-fold, viz. those of the sky, the air and the earth,'[2] and the passage in the *Ṛigveda*, that there are 33 gods, 11 in heaven, 11 on earth, and 11 in aerial waters, is repeated in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[3] and the *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*.[4] But elsewhere seven worlds of gods are mentioned,[5] which are in another place[6] said to be the three worlds and four quarters. This passage probably explains which those seven worlds were. In the *Atharvaveda*,[7] the gods are said to dwell in many regions. They are again spoken of as residing on earth, in the air, the heavens, the regions, the stars, the waters,[8] to which a passage in the *Atharvaveda*[9] adds plants and animals. They are also said to seat themselves in the firmament in heaven.[10] As contrasted with the world of the fathers, there are said to be two worlds; 'the world of the gods and the world of the fathers.'[11]

*Their Origin*

During this period Prajāpati is often said to be the creator of the gods:[12] 'From the upward breathings Prajāpati created the gods;'[13] 'created them from the breath of his mouth.'[14] In the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa*[15] only the birth of three principal deities of the earth, the atmosphere and the sky are referred to: 'Prajāpati conceived a desire, "May I be propagated; may I be multiplied". He practised fervour (*tapas*); having practised fervour he created these worlds; the earth, the atmosphere, the sky. He

[1] I. 139. 11.
[2] *Śat.*, VI. 5. 3. 3; see also, VI. 1. 2. 10; AV., X. 9, 12; *Nir.*, VII. 5.
[3] IV. 2. 2. 9.
[4] VII. 19. Found also in *Mait.*, I. 3, 15; and *Kāṭh.*, IV. 5; TS., I. 4. 10; cf. AV., XIX. 27. 11–13.
[5] *Śat.*, IX. 5. 2. 8. [6] *Śat.*, X. 2. 4. 4. [7] III. 26.
[8] *Śat.*, XIV. 3. 2. 4–14. [9] I. 30. 3.
[10] *Śat.*, VIII. 6. 1. 21. [11] *Śat.*, XII. 7. 3. 7.
[12] *devānāṁpitā.*—*Mait.*, IV. 14. 1. *Devān asṛjata.*—TB., III. 10. 9.
[13] *Śat.*, X. 1. 3. 1. [14] *Śat.*, XI. 1. 6. 7. [15] V. 32.

brooded over these worlds; from these thus brooded over, these luminaries were born; Agni was born from the earth, Vāyu from the atmosphere, Aditya from the sky.' The passage in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[1] where the gods are said to have been created from out of these worlds, probably refers to what is just quoted. Sometimes the gods are said to have sprung from Prajāpati along with the Asuras.[2] The neuter Bráhman, again, is said to be the source of the gods:[3] 'Verily, in the beginning, this [universe] was the Brāhman. It created the gods; and having created the gods, it made them ascend these worlds: Agni, this [terrestrial] world, Vāyu, the air, and Sūrya, the sky.'[4] This passage is probably more philosophical—taking Brāhman (n.) as the source of everything—than mythological. But it should be noted that Prajāpati is often identified with Brāhman (n.)[5] and the whole Brāhman.[6] He is also said to be Viśvakarman,[7] the Puruṣa[8] and the Dhaṭṛ[9] and to have been born out of the golden egg.[10]

In the *Atharvaveda*, all the thirty-three gods are said to be contained (*samāhitāḥ*), or distributed, in the body of the cosmic deity Skambha, 'support'.[11] The same hymn describes Skambha as one in whose body are contained the Ādityas, the Rudras and the Vasus; in whom is past and future and all the worlds firmly established.[12] In the same work 'all gods in the heavens' are said to have been born of the *ucchiṣṭa*, 'the sacrificial remnants'.[13]

*Their Immortality*

Gods are generally said to have been originally mortal, but gained immortality on being possessed by the Brāhman or

[1] VI. 5. 3. 3. [2] *Śat.*, I. 2. 4. 8; 5. 3. 2; IV. 2 4. 11; TS., III. 3. 7.
[3] *Brahman devān ajanayat.*—TB., II. 8. 8, 9. *Avīvṛdhat.*—*Mait.*, I. 1, 13.
[4] *Śat.*, XI. 2. 3. 1.
[5] *Śat.*, XIII. 6. 2. 8; and see VIII. 4. 1. 3, 4; AĀ., 5. 3. 2, 3.
[6] *Śat.*, VII. 3. 1. 42. [7] TB., III. 7. 9. 7; *Śat.*, IX. 4. 1. 12.
[8] TA., III. 10. 2; TB., II. 2. 5, 3; *Śat.*, VII. 4. 1, 15.
[9] *Śat.*, IX. 5. 1. 35. [10] *Śat.*, XI. 1. 6. 1 ff. [11] AV., X. 7, 13, 27.
[12] ibid., 22. [13] AV., XI. 7. 23-7.

by gaining the year.[1] The following story of how the gods attained immortality is related: 'The gods and the Asuras, both born of Prajāpati, were contending against each other. They were both soulless; [because] they were mortal; [for] he who is mortal, is soulless. Among these two (the gods and the Asuras) who were mortal, Agni alone was immortal ....Now whichsoever [of the gods] they (the Asuras) slew, he, indeed was so [slain]....They praised and practised austerities in the hope that they might overcome their enemies, the mortal Asuras. They saw this immortal *agnyādhāya* (consecrated fire). They said, "Come, let us place this immortal thing in our innermost soul"... The gods then established that [fire] in their innermost soul.. and [thereby they] became immortal and unconquerable.'[2]

Sometimes however, the gods are said to possess life longer than that of men, but not immortality: 'From Prajāpati were the deities created: Agni, Indra, Soma, Parameṣṭhin and Prājāpatya. They were born with a life of a thousand years.'[3] In another passage we simply have: 'Longer is the life of gods and shorter the life of men.'[4]

The following story also tells us how the gods became immortal, through sacrifices:[5]

'The gods (who were originally mortal) were afraid of this ender of life, the Death, the year (i.e.) Prajāpati, "Lest he should bring about the end of our life by [reducing the number of] days and nights [given to us]. They performed [many] rites... but they did not attain immortality [thereby]... They went on worshipping and toiling, desiring to obtain immortality." Prajāpati said to them: "Ye do not lay down all my forms; ... hence ye do not become immortal." They said, "Tell us thou thyself then, how we may lay down all thy forms." He said, "Lay down 360 enclosing-stones, 360 *yajuṣmati* (bricks) and 36 thereunto; and 10,800 *lokaṁpṛṇā* (bricks). Ye shall in this way lay down all my forms

[1] *Śat.*, XI. 1. 2. 12; 2, 3, 6.
[2] *Śat.*, II. 2. 2. 8–10, 14.
[3] *Śat.*, XI. 1. 6. 14–15.
[4] *Śat.*, VII. 3. 1. 10.
[5] *Śat.*, X. 4. 3. 3-4, 6-8.

and shall become immortal." And the gods laid them down accordingly and have become immortal since then.'

Prajāpati is said to have been both mortal and immortal in the beginning. 'His vital airs alone were immortal, his body mortal; [but] by this rite . . . he makes himself uniformly undecaying and immortal.'[1] 'The gods were afraid of death; they had [then] recourse to Prajāpati alone. Prajāpati worshipped them with this [offering]. Thus did the gods attain immortality.'[2]

### *The Gods and the Asuras*

An important feature of the mythology of this period is that the Asuras are now a class of demons, who are constantly fighting with the Devas. Both the Devas and the Asuras are, however, said to be the sons of Prajāpati.[3]

'Desirous of offspring, he went on singing praises and toiling. He laid the power of reproduction into his own self. By [the breath of] his mouth he created the gods; they were created on entering the sky. On creating them, there was, as it were, daylight for him. And by the downward breathing he created the Asuras; these were created on entering this earth. On creating them, there was, as it were, darkness for him.'[4] Hence the day belongs to the gods and the night to the Asuras.[5]

The Asuras are associated with the Rakṣases, and sometimes the Piśācas are mentioned as their allies. Against these are then leagued the gods, men and the Pitṛs. 'The gods, men and the Pitṛs were on one side, the Asuras, Rakṣases and Piśācas on the other.'[6]

In the *Atharvaveda*, the Asuras are said to know wisdom,[7] but on the whole they are mischievous evil powers. They are

1 *Śat.*, X. 1. 4. 1.

2 *Mait.*, II. 2. 2; see also TS., II. 3. 2. 1; *Kāth.*, XI. 4.

3 *Śat.*, I. 2. 4. 8, II. 2. 2. 8, etc.; TS., III. 3. 7. 1; TB., I. 4. 1. 1; Lévi, DS., p. 36.

4 *Śat.*, XI. 1. 6. 7-8. 5 TS., I. 7. 1, cf. AB., IV. 5.

6 TS., II. 4. 1. 1; see also *Śat.*, XI. 5. 5. 13; XIII. 8. 2. 3.

7 AV., VI. 108.

full of guile[1] and are the source of sorcery.[2] They have magic art as their Veda.[3] They are niggards and perverse haters of the gods.[4] Prajāpati gave them darkness (*tamas*) and illusion (*māyā*).[5] But even they perform sacrifices. 'What the gods did at the sacrifice, that the Asuras did: ... Then indeed the gods saw this silent praise, which the Asuras could not follow. Every weapon the gods raised, the Asuras perceived and countered. They could not, however, counter the silent prayer. By means of it the gods smote the Asuras and defeated them.'[6] In another place they are said to have made the offerings into their own mouths, through arrogance.[7]

The Asuras repeatedly contend with the gods for the sacrifice and for the possession of this world, etc., but are every time defeated. 'The gods and the Asuras were contending for the sacrifice, for Prajāpati, saying, "Ours he shall be! Ours he shall be!" The gods then went on singing praises, and toiling ... they possessed themselves of the whole sacrifice and thus excluded the Asuras.'[8] 'The gods and the Asuras, both sons of Prajāpati, were contending for the possession of this world. The gods drove out the Asuras, their rivals and enemies, from this world.'[9] 'The gods and the Asuras were contending for the regions, but the gods wrested the regions from the Asuras.'[10] They also try to throw obstacles in the way of the gods performing sacrifice: 'When the gods were coming to perform a sacrifice, the Asuras, the mischievous fiends, tried to smite them from the south, saying, "Ye shall not sacrifice! Ye shall not perform the sacrifice!" Then Indra, with Bṛhaspati as his ally, chased them away.'[11] But although the Asuras are defeated or driven away every time, they do not give up their mischief-making: 'The gods vanquished the Asuras and yet these afterwards harassed them again.'[12] The tales of the

[1] AV., III. 9. 4. [2] AV., VIII. 5. 9. [3] *Śat.*, XIII. 4. 3. 11.
[4] *Śat.*, XIII. 8. 2. 3. [5] *Śat.*, II. 4. 2. 5.
[6] AB., II. 31; see TS., VI. 4. 10, 11.
[7] *Śat.*, V. 1. 1. 1; IX. 1. 8. 1.
[8] *Śat.*, XI. 5. 9. 3. 4. [9] *Śat.*, XIII. 8. 2. 1.
[10] *Śat.*, IX. 2. 3. 8. [11] *Śat.*, IX. 2. 3. 2-3. [12] *Śat.*, I. 2. 4. 8.

fights of the gods and the Asuras are, however, said not to be true.[1]

The following story is told of how the gods became truthful and the Asuras untruthful: 'The gods and the Asuras entered upon their father Prajāpati's inheritance, viz. speech—truth and untruth. [At that time] they both spake the truth as well as untruth, and speaking alike, they were alike. [But] the gods relinquished untruth and held fast to truth, while the Asuras relinquished truth and held fast to untruth. The truth in the Asuras beheld this...and went over to the gods; the untruth in the gods beheld this... and went over to the Asuras. The gods [thus] spake nothing but truth, and the Asuras nothing but untruth.'[2]

The gods are not, however, always truthful. In their conflicts with the demons they occasionally have recourse to both untruth and treachery. 'The gods entrusting truth to the Aśvins, Pūṣan and Vāc, conquered the Asuras by untruth.'[3] When the gods, men and the Pitṛs were fighting against the Asuras, Rakṣases and Piśācas, the gods found that the deaths in their ranks were due to the Rakṣases. They therefore invited the Rakṣases, who chose the boon that they should be sharers in the booty. Then indeed, the gods conquered the Rakṣases. But having conquered the Asuras, they drove away the Rakṣases. The Rakṣases, [saying], "Ye have done falsely," surrounded the gods on all sides. The gods then offered to Agni and thereby repelled the Rakṣases. Thus the gods prospered and the Rakṣases were defeated.'[4]

The Asuras are said to have recourse to magic.[5] They are also called magicians[6] with iron nets, who wander about with hooks and bonds of iron.[7] They are also said to roam

[1] *Śat.*, XI. 1. 6. 9. [2] *Śat.*, IX. 5. 1. 12–16.
[3] TB., I. 8. 3. 3. [4] TS., II. 4. 1. [5] *Śat.*, II. 4. 3. 2.
[6] *māyinaḥ*, as tr. by Griffiths, AV., XIX. 66. 1. Here Sāyaṇa explains it by the word *Kuṭilāḥ*, while in another place he gives *māyinaḥ* = *māyāvantāḥ asurāḥ*, AV., XIX. 27. 5. 6.
[7] AV., XIX. 66. 1.

at will and assume varied shapes.[1] Just as the gods have a Purohita, so have the Asuras. 'Bṛhaspati was the Purohita of the gods, Śaṇḍa and Marka of the Asuras.'[2] Kāvya Uśanā also is said to be the Purohita of the Asuras.[3]

### *Other Characteristics of the Gods*

The gods are said to be invisible, as the sacrifice:[4] 'Hidden, as it were, are the gods to men.'[5] The gods do not sleep,[6] nor shed tears;[7] and although the *Chāndogya Upaniṣhad*[8] says that they neither eat nor drink, the food of the gods is often mentioned. Once when the gods approached Prajāpati, he said to them, 'The sacrifice [shall be] your food, immortality your sap, and the sun your light.'[9] 'That which is cooked belongs to the gods;'[10] 'the hymn of praise as well as sacrifice is the food of the gods.'[11] They are also said to make food of him who hates them.[12] 'The gods do not dwell in each other's houses.'[13]

The gods are free from decrepitude;[14] all of them are of joyful soul.[15] The gods love the mystic.[16] They killed Death[17] and made themselves boneless and immortal.[18] The gods are the guardians of the world,[19] but there are Gods and Greater-Gods (*devāśca mahādevāḥ*).[20] 'At first the gods were all alike, all good. Of them . . . three, Agni, Indra and Sūrya desired, "May we be superior!" They went on praising and toiling. They saw those Atigrāhya cups of *soma*, by means of which they became superior.'[21] 'The gods are

[1] *Vājasaneyi Saṁhitā*, II. 30.
[2] TS., VI. 4. 10. 1; Lévi, DS., p. 56, n. 4.
[3] Td.B., VI. 7. 1.
[4] *Śat.*, III. 1. 3. 23.
[5] *Śat.*, III. 3, 4, 6.
[6] *Śat.*, III. 2. 2. 22; AV., XII. 1, 7.
[7] *Mait.*, II. 1. 10; cf. AB., V. 9. 2.
[8] III. 6–10. 1.
[9] *Śat.*, II. 4. 2. 1.
[10] *Śat.*, III. 8. 3. 7.
[11] *Śat.*, XII. 8. 1. 2; V. 1. 1. 2; cf. I. 2. 1. 21; and XIV. 3. 2. 22–29.
[12] *Śat.*, VI. 6. 3, 11.
[13] AB., V. 9.
[14] AV., III. 31. 1.
[15] *Śat.*, X. 3. 5. 13.
[16] *Śat.*, IX. 1. 1. 2, 7; 2. 22–36; X. 5. 2. 14; 6. 2. 2; XIV. 1. 1. 13.
[17] AV., XI. 5, 19.
[18] *Śat.*, IX. 1. 2. 34.
[19] TS., II. 1. 11. 4; *Mait.*, IV. 12. 1; *Kaṭh.*, XI. 12.
[20] TA., I. 9. 3.
[21] *Śat.*, IV. 5. 4. 1–4.

the days...they have the evil dispelled from them. They are bliss...they are glorious.'[1] They are called the finders of paths[2] and sometimes identified with the rays of the sun.[3]

'In the beginning, both the gods and men were together here. And whatever did not belong to men, for that they importuned the gods, saying, "This is not ours; let it be ours." Being indignant at this importunity, the gods then disappeared.'[4] In another passage the gods are said to come first and then men.[5] Gārhapatya is the world of men and the Āhavavanīya of the gods; and the life of the gods is longer than of men.[6]

'Verily, there is one law which the gods do keep, namely, the truth. It is through this that their conquest, their glory is unassailable.'[7] They are said to have established themselves by speaking the truth, by performing the truth.[8] 'What the gods did is done here;'[9] 'one must do as the gods did.'[10] 'The gods know the mind of men. In his mind a man proposes; it passes on to the breath and from the breath to the wind, and the wind tells the gods what the mind of man is.'[11] Thus 'what he proposes in his mind goes forth to the gods'.[12] As compared with the gods who are the truth, man is said to be the untruth;[13] but 'whoever walks in the way of the gods walks in the way of truth.'[14] 'Immortality and truth are deposited in the gods,'[15] and it is only to the gods that the true knowledge belongs.[16]

'The gods have Dharma Indra as their king and the Sāman as their Veda.'[17] Indra is said to have obtained the

[1] *Śat.*, II. 1. 4. 9; cf. AB., IV. 25.
[2] VS., II. 21; *Śat.*, 1. 9. 2. 28.
[3] *Śat.*, IV. 1. 1. 24; cf. II. 3. 1. 7.
[4] *Śat.*, II. 3. 4. 4.
[5] *Śat.*, IV. 6. 4. 6.
[6] *Śat.*, VII. 3. 1. 10.
[7] *Śat.*, III. 4. 2. 8; cf. XIV. 1. 1. 33.
[8] *Śat.*, III. 4. 2. 8, 14.
[9] *Śat.*, VI. 3. 2. 6.
[10] *Śat.*, VI. 4. 1. 3-5.
[11] *Śat.*, III. 4. 2. 6-7.
[12] AV., XII. 4. 31.
[13] *Śat.*, I. 1. 1. 4; 2. 17; III. 3. 2. 2; 9. 4. 1.
[14] *Śat.*, IV. 3. 4. 16.
[15] AV., VIII. 5, 25.
[16] *Śat.*, X. 3. 5. 13.
[17] *Śat.*, XII. 4. 3. 14.

kingship of the gods from Prajāpati,[1] but he also appears to have been elected by the gods as their chief for his excellence. 'When the gods had performed the guest offering, discord befell them. They became aware of it. "Forsooth, we are in an evil plight, the Asura-Rakṣases have come in between us: we shall fall a prey to our enemies. Let us come to an agreement and yield to the excellence of one of us!" They yielded to the excellence of Indra; wherefore it is said, "Indra is all the deities, the gods have Indra for their chief."'[2] The gods are said to draw together round Indra.[3]

*Gods and the Sacrifice*

In the literature of this period the gods are most intimately connected with the sacrifice. They are not merely the gods who are invoked to come to the sacrifice and partake of it, they are now the actual performers of the sacrifice.[4] Nay, their very coming into being is due to the sacrifice, since they are the sons of Prajāpati who is himself the sacrifice. Nor is now the sacrifice meant to win the favour of the gods, as was the case in the religion of the *Ṛigveda*. Now the sacrifice is by itself all-powerful. Performing a certain rite brings about a certain result, as it had done when the gods performed it.

Besides their birth, most of the qualities and powers that the gods possess are due to their performing the sacrifices: 'By means of the sacrifice, the gods ascended to heaven,[5] made the conquest of the world of heaven,[6] gained heaven and defeated the Asuras.'[7] 'The gods gained heaven by worshipping with all the songs or metres (*chandas*).'[8] 'The

[1] TB., II. 2. 10.

[2] *Śat.*, III. 4. 2. 1-2; as tr. by Eggling; see also, IX. 2. 3. 3-4; IV. 6. 6. 1ff.

[3] *Śat.*, VIII. 7. 1. 6.

[4] AV., XIX. 6, 10; VS., XIX. 12; XXXI. 14; *Śat.*, XI. 5. 5. 12; but also RV., X. 90, 6.

[5] *Śat.*, I. 7. 3. 1; see, TS., I. 7. 1. 3.

[6] *Śat.*, I. 6. 2. 1; see, AB., I. 16. [7] TS., I. 6. 10. 2.

[8] *Śat.*, III. 9. 3. 10; *Mait.*, III. 2. 3; Tḍ.B., VII. 4. 2; AB., I. 9.

gods and the Asuras contended for superiority. The Asuras then defiled both kinds of plants by magic (*kṛtyā*) and poison (*viṣa*), hoping that in this way they might overcome the gods. The gods overcame this by sacrifice.'[1] Desiring glory and success, they sat to perform a *satra*;[2] desiring immortality, they placed the immortal *agnyādhāya* (consecrated fire) in their innermost soul.[3] 'As are men, so were the gods in the beginning. They desired, "Let us strike off misfortune, the evil of death, and reach the conclave of the gods (*daivīm saṁsadam*)". They saw this twenty-four night [rite]; they grasped it and sacrificed with it. Then they struck off the misfortune, the evil of death, and reached the conclave of the gods.'[4]

The gods offer sacrifices to one another,[5] or sacrifice to sacrifice itself:[6] 'The gods milked the sacrifice; the sacrifice milked the Asuras; the Asuras being milked were defeated.'[7]

1 *Śat.*, II. 4. 3. 2-3.
2 *Śat.*, XIV 1. 1. 3; TS., II. 3. 3. 1; see Lévi, DS, pp. 41-3, 54-7.
3 *Śat.*, II. 2 2. 9-10.
4 TS., VII. 4. 2. 1. as tr. by Keith.
5 *Śat.*, V. 1. 1. 2; XI. 1 3 2.
6 AS., I. 16.
7 TS., I. 7. 1.

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